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# STREET & SMITH'S **LOVE STORY**★

EVERY WEEK

**MAGAZINE**

FEB. 25, 1933

ILLUSTRATED



**SWEET<sup>and</sup> LOVELY**

by  
**MIRIAM STONE**

also

Florence White  
Jennifer Ames



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Late Model No 5

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# STREET & SMITH'S LOVE STORY MAGAZINE

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Vol. XCVI

EVERY WEEK

No. 5

## CONTENTS FOR FEBRUARY 25, 1933

### CONTINUED STORIES

Temporary Wife . . . . .	<i>Florence White</i> . . . . .	54
In Five Parts—Part Four		
Professional Lover . . . . .	<i>Jennifer Ames</i> . . . . .	104
In Seven Parts—Part Seven		

### COMPLETE STORIES

Sweet And Lovely . . . . .	<i>Miriam Stone</i> . . . . .	2
Tempest . . . . .	<i>John Scott Douglas</i> . . . . .	20
Kisses Of Scorn . . . . .	<i>Sarah Dawson</i> . . . . .	32
One Hour . . . . .	<i>Marie Hoyt</i> . . . . .	70
Moonlight Marriage . . . . .	<i>Jane Littell</i> . . . . .	76
Only You . . . . .	<i>Jessie Reynolds</i> . . . . .	91
All's Fair In Love . . . . .	<i>Zelda Vaughn</i> .. . . .	121

### POETRY

Splendid Night . . . . .	<i>Peter A. Lea</i> . . . . .	19
I Cannot Forget You . . . . .	<i>Franklin Pierce Carrigan</i> . . . . .	31
Your Eyes . . . . .	<i>Mary Carolyn Davies</i> . . . . .	75
Remembering . . . . .	<i>Helen K. Roberts</i> . . . . .	90
My Loves . . . . .	<i>Kathryn Cole</i> . . . . .	137

### DEPARTMENTS

Your Stars And You . . . . .	<i>Kai</i> . . . . .	132
The Friendliest Corner . . . . .	<i>Mary Morris</i> . . . . .	138
The Friend In Need . . . . .	<i>Laura Alston Brown</i> . . . . .	144

Beginning next week, Maysie Greig's new serial, "Ten-cent Love."

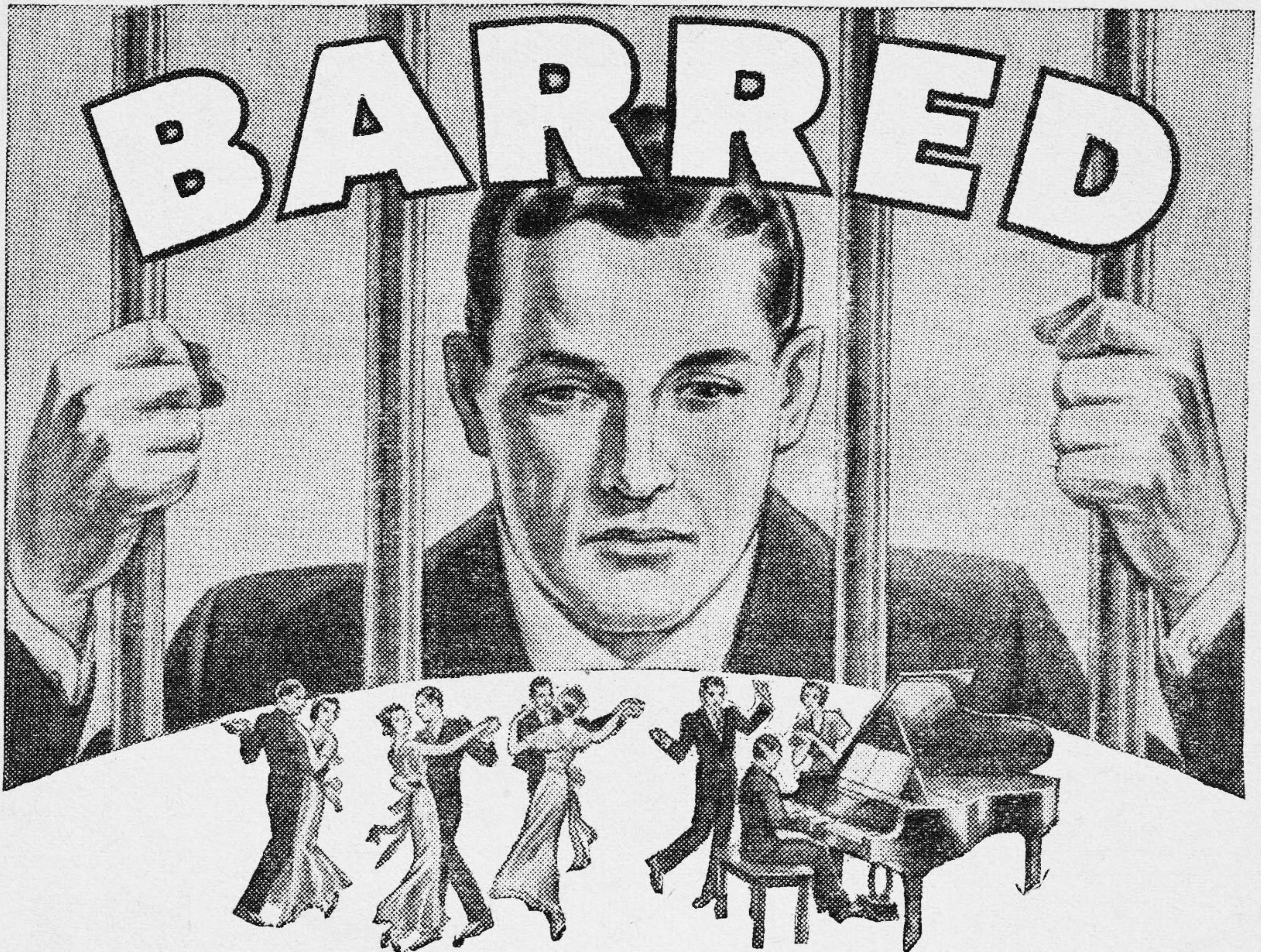
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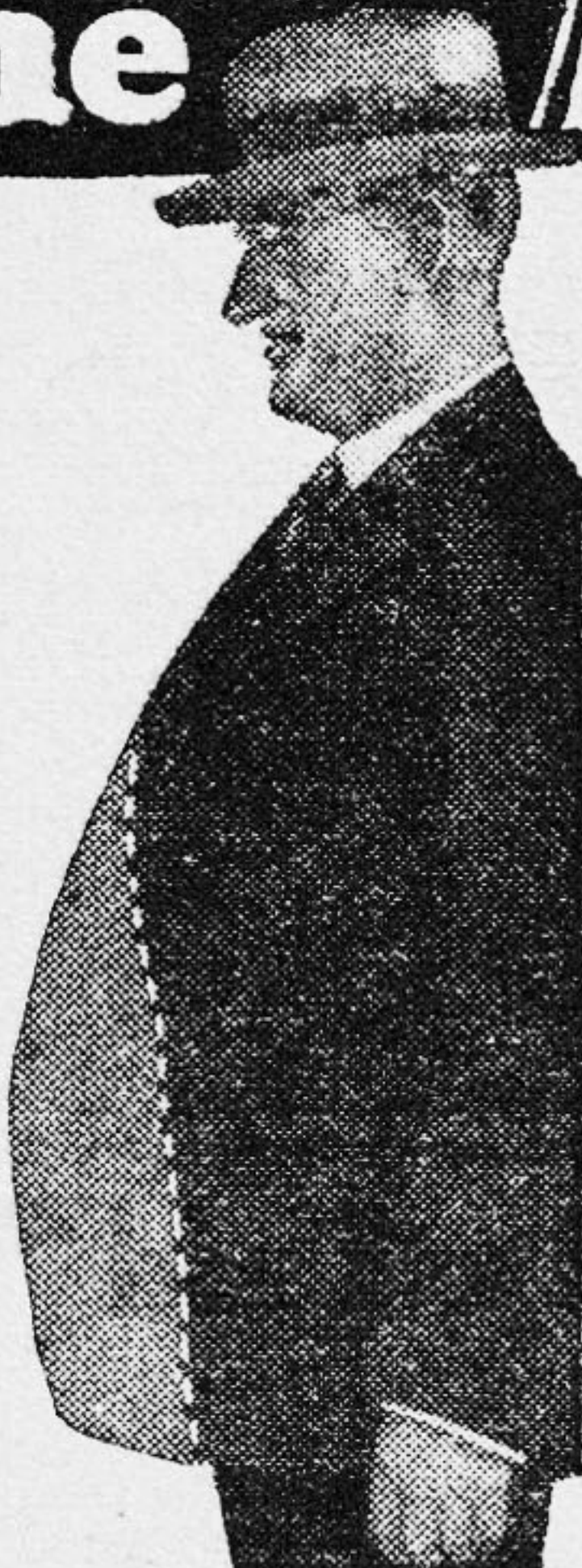
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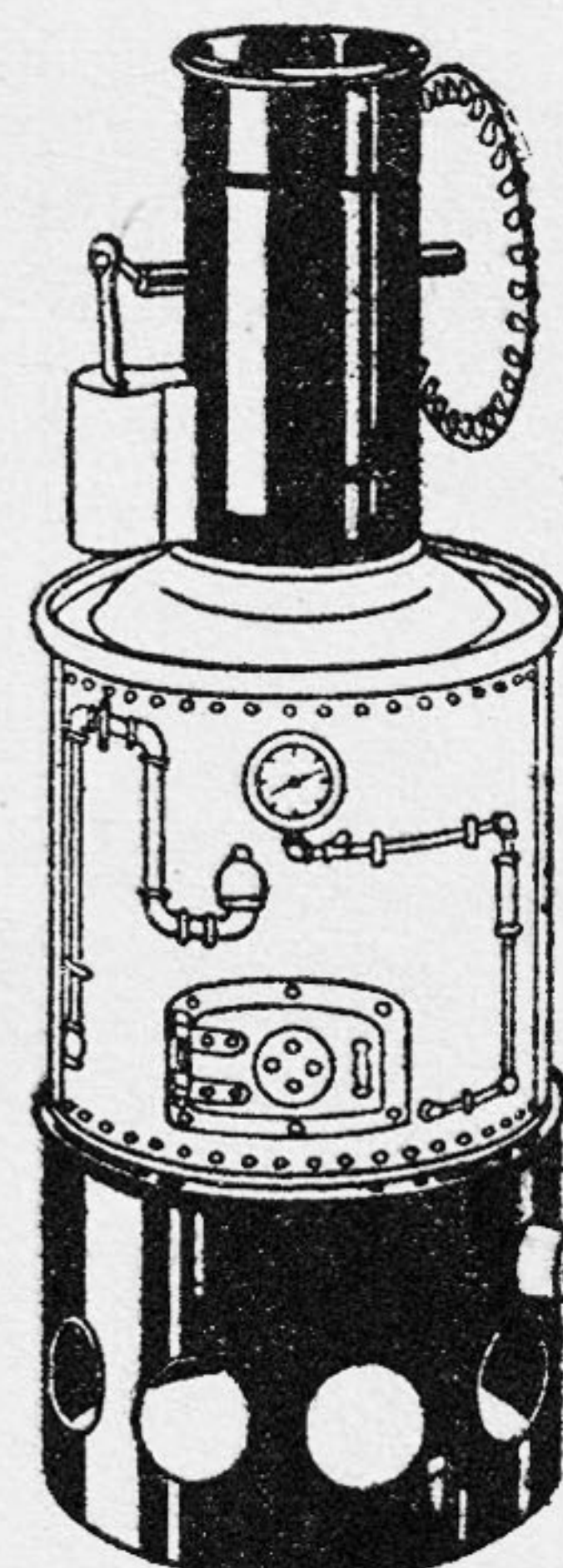
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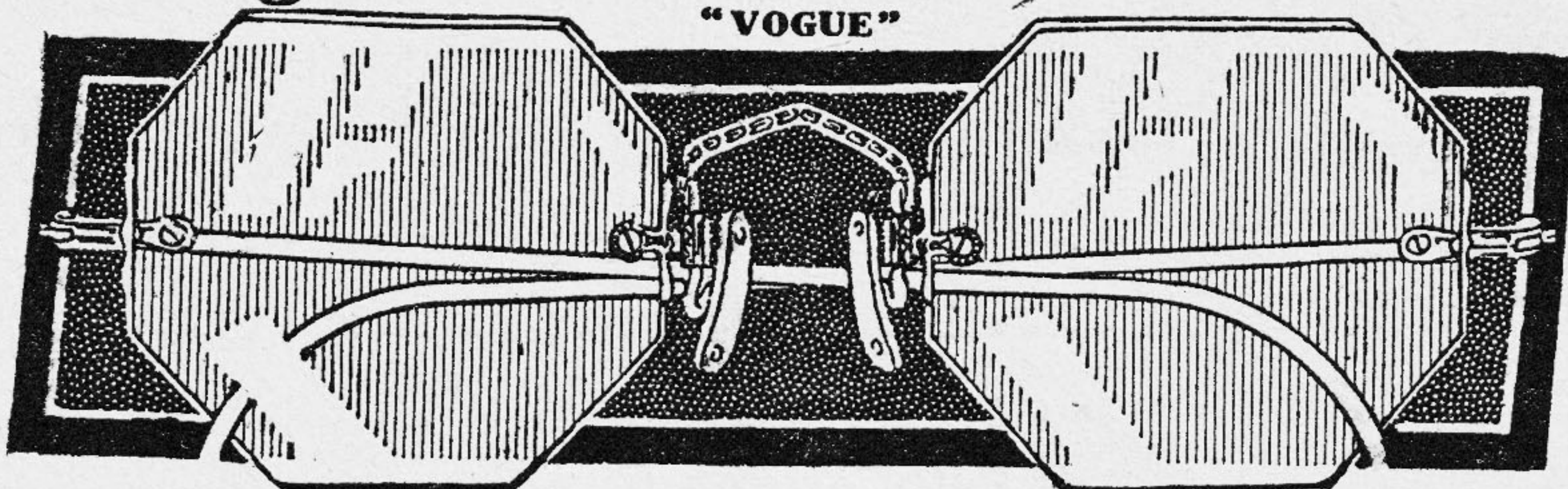
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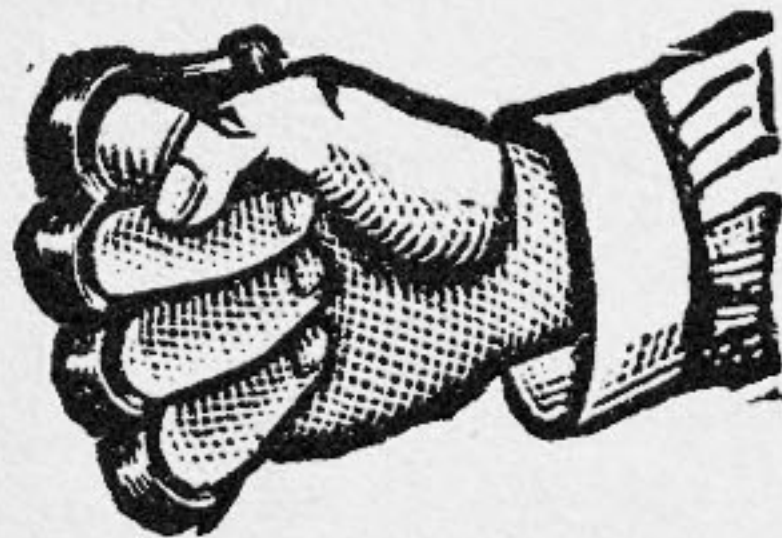
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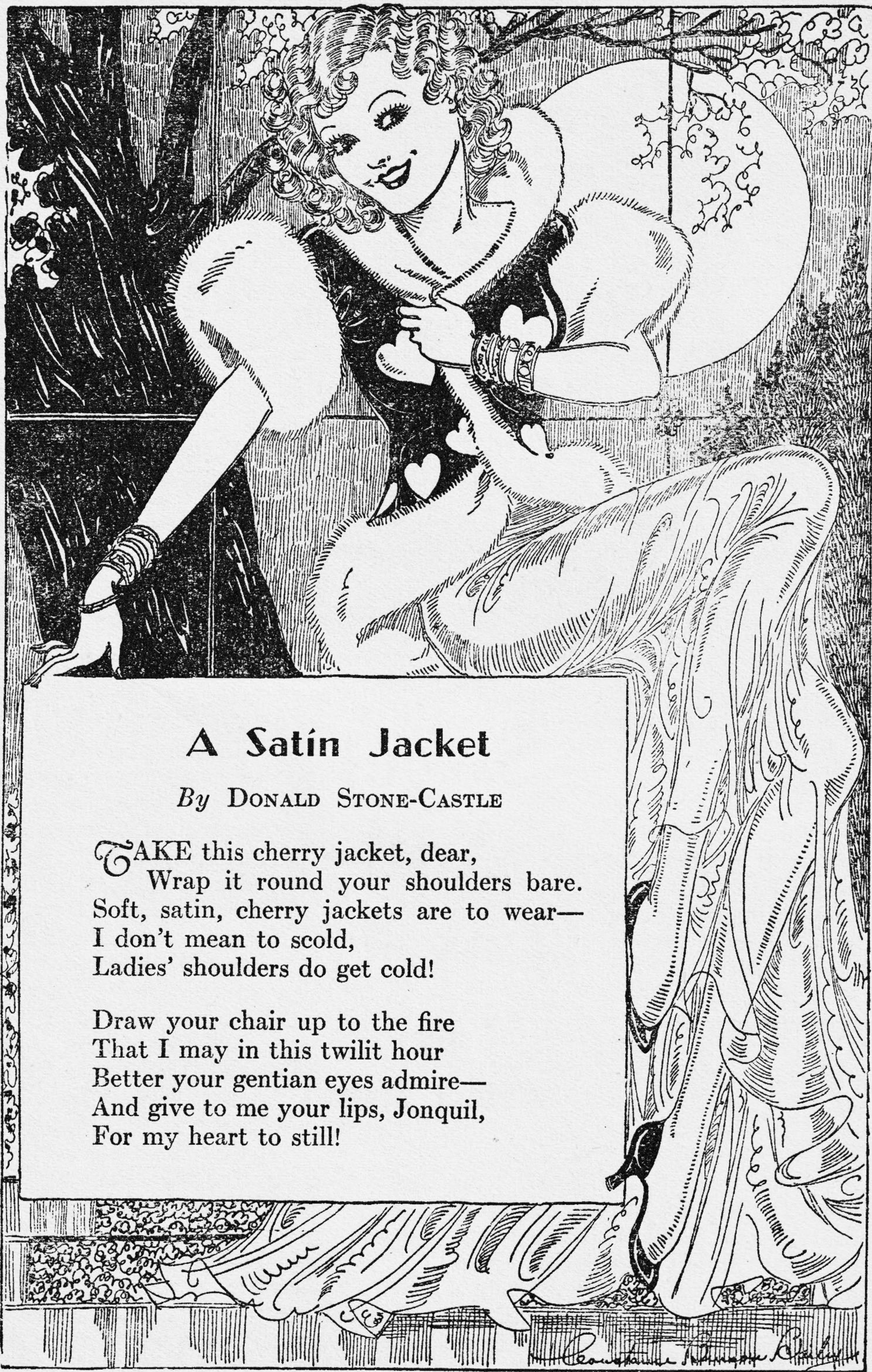
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## A Satin Jacket

*By* DONALD STONE-CASTLE

TAKE this cherry jacket, dear,  
Wrap it round your shoulders bare.  
Soft, satin, cherry jackets are to wear—  
I don't mean to scold,  
Ladies' shoulders do get cold!

Draw your chair up to the fire  
That I may in this twilit hour  
Better your gentian eyes admire—  
And give to me your lips, Jonquil,  
For my heart to still!





**C**LIFF! Oh, Cliff!" cried Ellen Desmond in a voice choked with both grief and happiness, reaching him almost before he had crossed the threshold of the library.

Snatching her in his arms, Ellen's unexpected caller crushed her to his heart. Then he remembered.

"Oh, my dear!" Clifford Manning breathed compassionately, raising his lips from her fragrant hair and holding her a little off from him. To see Ellen in mourning gave him a shock. She had always before worn only bright and daring colors that matched her variegated charm and her vivacious temperament. "Did I beat my last telegram to it,

# Sweet And Lovely

By  
**Miriam Stone**

Ellen? I'm sorry I couldn't get across the country in time for—yesterday."

"It wasn't your fault, darling," murmured Ellen faintly, "and maybe it's just as well, now you're here. The day after a funeral is always the worst one, they say. The awful let-down, you know, Cliff. I guess to-day's when I needed you most. But how on earth did you make it so soon?"

"I flew from the coast the minute I got your wire; took the first transcontinental plane I could get, dear-

est. Can you tell me about it, Ellen? It must have been very sudden."

"It was. It was just as if he'd had a terrible shock—a mental shock, I mean—not physical. Poor dad slumped completely a little



over a week ago, Cliff. Just went to bed and gave up. And he was in perfect health; the doctors said they couldn't find a thing the matter with him! Though I thought he'd been acting for some little time as if he had something on his mind. I couldn't get a thing out of him—you know how he was, just proud and quiet, always. If there *was* anything——” She frowned painfully.

“Me, perhaps?” suggested the man uncomfortably.

“Don't!” cried Ellen. “Of course not, Cliff! He knew you loved me and wanted me. You'd told him so, darling, and that's why he froze you out. And he knew I loved you, Cliff; or, as he put it, that I was infatuated with you. Though I'm afraid he quite believed I'd get bravely over it if I didn't see you for a while. You know he wanted me to marry Walter Fairborough eventually, for the sake of the business,” she said sadly.

“I know,” responded Cliff a little grimly.

“But you can't exactly blame dad, darling,” said Ellen softly. “He was so proud of his business. He wanted it to go on and stay in the family, and you'd never make a banker. As dad often said, Desmond & Company had been the finest and squarest private banking house in New York for three generations, had never lost a single cent for anybody! And Walter was a man after his own heart. I'll bet Walter added his fingers and multiplied his toes in the cradle. He's been with dad ever since he was fifteen and knows as much about the business as dad did.”

“He'll have to go on with it, won't he?”

“I suppose,” sighed Ellen. “I guess I'll have to take him in as partner. It belongs to me now, you know. Dad was going to give Wal-

ter a partnership, anyway, for a wedding present when he married me.”

“But you're going to marry me!” exclaimed Cliff vehemently. “I mean,” he stammered, “I'm not trying to take advantage of—of your father's not being here, Ellen, to make——”

“Of course I'm going to marry you,” the girl interrupted. “I was going to marry you as soon as I was eighteen, anyway, darling. That will be in a week now, you know, but——”

“A week!” he exclaimed in solemn ecstasy.

Ellen shook her head.

“Not now, darling,” she told him softly. “I said I *was* going to, but that was before——”

“I understand, sweetheart,” Cliff broke in huskily. “Of course, we've got to wait. How long?”

“At least six months, I suppose,” sighed the girl. “If dad had lived, I'd have done it and brought him around in half that time. He liked you—he had no reason not to. It was only that he'd made up his mind to Walter Fairborough.”

“And your mother? How is she?” asked Cliff.

“Isabel?” Ellen smiled wanly. “You don't have to worry about Isabel. You ought to know that. Of course, dad was the law and the prophets to her, and she's all broken up, but—well, I'm going to stand by Isabel now. She always has to have somebody, you know.”

Clifford Manning looked long into the lovely face not a foot away from his own. Ellen's unwavering blue eyes were wide, straight corridors to her soul. Love and faith and honor streamed out of them like light from the stars. Yet it seemed to the man as if the sun shining across from the other side of Madison Avenue suddenly disappeared behind a cloud, as



if a winter wind swept all at once across the warmth of the dead banker's library.

"Yes, it's up to you, Ellen," he said finally and hoarsely. "I'm not afraid of your mother's trying to influence you against me any more than I was afraid of your father, my darling. We met and we were meant for each other, and we knew it! But I'm suddenly afraid!"

"Afraid!" She laughed. "What are you afraid of, you great big idiot? That I don't love you as much as you think I ought to?"

"No, it's not that."

"Listen!" commanded the girl. "What have you got to be afraid of, silly? Oh, Cliff, I love you so much it hurts. And you know it, Cliff! Don't you know it?"

"You've been my wonder and my glory and my worship ever since I first saw you," he choked.

"Well, then. If you'd asked me to fly to China with you the second day I saw you, I'd have packed a cigarette case and climbed in! And you're afraid I don't love you? Oh, you're a great big silly!"

"Don't shame me, my darling," he said humbly. "Haven't I loved you and wanted you the same way since I first saw you and the whole world turned over? But we've got to wait six months for each other!"

"Is that my fault?" pleaded Ellen. "My father's just died, dearest, and I loved him, too! Be reasonable, Cliff!"

"As long as you love me, nothing matters!" declared Cliff fanatically. "Nothing! I can even wait years for you, Ellen, as long as you love me!"

"I'll show you!"

Ellen Desmond took a step forward and put her soft arms about the neck of the man she loved, pressing against him until he could feel

her heart thumping feverishly under the soft warmth of her body. Looking deeply into his eyes, she slowly drew his head down until she could reach his mouth. Then she set her sweet red lips on his and clung there. Finally, with a little shiver, she gently put him away from her.

"Kisses maybe aren't so awfully new in my young life," said Ellen huskily with flaming cheeks. "But I never kissed anybody like that before, or wanted to. Not even you, Cliff. That was for the man I'm going to marry, just to prove that I belong to him. Now, do you believe that I love you?"

Cliff nodded and choked.

"Absolutely, you loveliest and dearest thing in all the world! I did, anyway, Ellen darling. I don't know what came over me, just a fool sort of a feeling that didn't mean anything. Because I love you and want you so, I guess."

There was a dry cough from the doorway. Ellen and Cliff whirled around, so that they stood side by side. Between the heavy curtains stood another man, dressed in perfect taste. His sharp eyes regarded them coolly from their vantage point over his sharp, thin nose and sharp, thin lips.

"Walter!" exclaimed Ellen, flushing again.

"Pardon me," Walter Fairborough smiled faintly. "Just dropped in to see how you and your mother were, Ellen, after yesterday. And to confer with her for a few moments about business—if she's able to see me."

"Oh, yes," said the girl crisply. "You know Cliff Manning, don't you, Walter? Don't act as if you didn't see him!"

"Oh, quite well. Seen him and heard of him, both," replied Fairborough with a careless gesture of





recognition. "H'are you, Manning? Thought you were out on the coast.

*"I love you and want you so, Ellen darling," said Cliff. There was a dry cough from the doorway. Ellen and Cliff whirled around. Between the heavy curtains stood Walter. His sharp eyes regarded them coolly.*

Or so Mr. Desmond said a couple of weeks ago."

"I was, but I'm back again," answered Cliff dryly.

"And for weeks," said Ellen, with something that sounded like significance. "If you want to see Isabel,



Walter, I think you'll find her upstairs in her own sitting room. She's a total wreck, of course, and she's lying down, but I guess you can see her. Far as business goes, though, you know she doesn't know any more about it than a newborn kitten, and never did. So you'll have to talk to me about it sometime. Would Wednesday afternoon do, at tea?"

It was a clean dismissal, and Walter Fairborough was forced to accept it as such.

"That will be perfectly all right, Ellen, if it suits you. Sorry to have to bother you about anything under the circumstances, but there are a few matters that are bound to come up before things can be definitely settled, you know. Well, I'll just run up and see if I can do anything for Mrs. Desmond."

With a light bow and a quick glance at both of them, he backed silently out of the doorway, the velvet curtains falling together in front of him. Cliff looked after him.

"It might have been less embarrassing if our friend had been announced," he said, biting his lip. "I wonder how much he saw?"

"All there was to see, and hear, probably," admitted Ellen with a little shrug. "Walter isn't the kind that misses much. But he wasn't sneaking, darling. First place, he couldn't have had any idea you were here, and second place, Walter has the run of the house, you know. Dad even gave him a key a year or two ago. Even before he ever let me have one!"

"Just the same, dearest," said Cliff uncomfortably, "I'd rather that your mother should have heard about us from either you or myself first. She might think that it—that I was rather cold-blooded, so soon after——"

"Hot-blooded would be the word," Ellen smiled at him, "and anyway, if anybody's to blame for what Walter saw, it's me. But he won't say a word to Isabel, darling. That's one thing about Walter, he's discreet to the point of indecency. I don't believe he ever let his right foot know that his left foot had a shoe on. I'll tell Isabel about us myself, just as soon as he goes."

"So soon?" ventured Cliff. "I hope it won't hurt her feelings, Ellen."

"She knows I love you, just as dad knew it," replied Ellen simply. "And she never had the same reason for wanting me to marry Walter instead of you, darling. Business and banks and things are just words in a dictionary to Isabel. Of course, she'd understand that we wouldn't plan to get married until it was proper after dad's death. Leave it to me, darling. She'll be clinging to you and depending on you inside of three days."

"That would make it easier," answered Cliff gravely. "We'll give her the three days, then. As a matter of fact, I've got to run down to Washington for just about three days. You don't mind?" he asked apologetically. "You see, sweetheart, when I rushed back across the country to you, at the same time I had to plan to attend to some other matters, too, here in the East. How was I to know happiness and you were coming to me so unexpectedly? I was afraid you might have been persuaded to——"

"There you go again, afraid of something," Ellen interrupted tenderly. "You didn't really trust me, did you, darling? Listen, Cliff, I loved dad dearly, and tried to do what he wished, but I told him just what I felt and what I was going to do about loving you and marry-



ing Walter, so I don't feel in the least disrespectful or disloyal in sticking to my guns. Dad understands now if he didn't before," she added with soft assurance, "because he did want me to be happy, I know."

"I'll make you happy!" promised Cliff huskily.

"I am happy, now it's settled that we belong to each other for good and all. So beat it for Washington, darling. What's three or four days after the last three or four months? By the time you get back I'll have Isabel voting for you in every precinct. Kiss me again, all of my heart!"

"But, darling," quavered Mrs. Desmond, "your father said you were going to marry Walter! Why, he'd planned for it! So how can you possibly marry Cliff Manning? Not that he isn't a nice, sweet boy, but——"

"Maybe dad wanted me to marry Walter, but he knew I wasn't going to," Ellen cut in calmly, "because I told him so. Don't bother your little head about it, precious, because you'll like Cliff a lot better than Walter. It's all settled."

"But Walter expects you to marry him! Why, he said so this very afternoon—that is, he was talking about when you two would be married, and so on. Of course, he doesn't expect the wedding right away. But he said he saw no reason for putting it off any longer than was necessary."

"Oh, he did?" Ellen narrowed her eyes. "Some little optimist, Walter Fairborough! Did he mention anything else he didn't see?" she asked carelessly.

"I don't know what you mean, darling," answered her mother helplessly.

"Then I guess you don't," admitted Ellen. "It was none of his business, anyway."

"Oh, business," fluttered Mrs. Desmond. "I suppose it does have something to do with the business, now that your father's gone. You're Desmond & Company, darling, I understand, but what on earth do you know about banking? That's why you ought to marry Walter, don't you see? Then he can stay and take care of everything. Good heavens, what would we do without the business? How would we live?"

"Well, the business isn't everything, Isabel," said her daughter dryly. "There's money enough besides, you know, in real estate and stocks and things."

"Is there? I didn't know, darling. I don't know a thing about business. Only that your dear father thought everything of the bank and of Walter, and of your marrying him so as to keep a Desmond in it."

"Well, for Pete's sake, darling, if a girl owns a bank or a business, she doesn't have to marry it, too, does she?" demanded Ellen. "If I make Walter Fairborough a partner in the business as dad intended to do, is there any reason why he can't keep right on running it, even if I am married to somebody else?"

Her mother stared at her out of vague violet eyes. Then they brightened.

"Why, no," she said, surprised. "How clever you are, Ellen! I always said you were much more like your father that way than you were like me, darling. I wonder your dear father never thought of that! And Cliff is such a sweet boy! I always liked him!"

"Well, there you are, pet," said Ellen with a breath of relief. "I thought you'd see it my way after I'd explained it to you. Believe me,



darling, you'll have ever so much snappier a time with Cliff for a son-in-law than with Walter. Something like the difference between a bottle of joy water and a bottle of ink, if you get what I mean. Walter may be all right in his way, but it's the other way for me. Why, the poor fish lives in cold storage! He just adds to the depression."

To her astonishment, her mother's baby face clouded over again.

"That's it," faltered Mrs. Desmond uncertainly. "Walter was talking about the depression and something about how things were in such a bad way, and your being married to him would make everything all right. I couldn't understand it all, of course."

"What's that?" frowned Ellen. "What would our marriage have to do with it? And what's the matter with the bank?"

"How do I know!" demanded her mother with a feeble gesture. "It was all so vague, darling. It was only about how your poor, dear father would have wanted it, how it would help things; nothing definite, you know, but somehow it scared me!"

"Scared you!" exploded the girl. "I told him he had no right to talk business to you," she declared angrily. "He knows you don't know a darn thing about it. Oh, forget it, darling! Walter was only trying to get you over on his side on this marry-me proposition! But I'll fix him! He's coming to talk business with *me* on Wednesday, and I'll make it plain to him that if marriage is a pleasure, business and pleasure don't mix! Leave it to me, Isabel!"

Which Mrs. Desmond was more than satisfied to do.

"That will be so much better, darling. My poor head just gets all

mixed up, you know. It's only that your dear father—I mean, Ellen, I hope things can go the way he wished them to."

"Leave it to me," repeated Ellen darkly. "Maybe Walter's just talking because he's afraid he won't get that partnership dad promised him. Well, he won't if he tries any funny business with the marriage problem! You'd be surprised!"

But it was Ellen herself who was surprised on Wednesday afternoon.

"I don't get you at all, Walter," she said impatiently after five minutes of argument. "I've told you flatly that I don't want to marry you and won't marry you, and yet you keep harping on it! You must have seen for yourself the other day"—she flushed crimson—"that you haven't got a chance."

"That can be forgotten and forgiven," he replied calmly.

Ellen stared in amazement at this exhibition of extraordinary unconcern or generosity. She was about to resent it as a piece of sheer insolence, when it occurred to her that there was evident and ominous assurance behind it.

"Thank you almost to death, and then some," she said slowly, "but what does that mean, Walter? Got something up your sleeve? You might as well lay all your cards on the table."

"I had hoped I wouldn't have to," he shrugged. "I had trusted that you'd remember your promise to marry me, and your duty to your father, Ellen."

"I never promised to marry you!" she cried. "It was only dad who talked about it."

"Exactly," he said. "And I'm wondering if your mother——"

"You leave Isabel out of it!" Ellen interrupted. "This is just between you and me!"



"True, I should much prefer to spare her."

"Spare her?" jerked out the girl, a chill creeping over her. "What do you mean, spare her!"

"Spare her any knowledge of the painful and unhappy circumstances, my dear," purred Walter softly,

"that may induce you to change your mind about not marrying me."

Ellen began to feel alarmed, but she was still defiant.

"Believe me," she assured him, "it would take an army and a couple of earthquakes to make me change my mind about marrying you! In any



*"Are you absolutely heartless?" she cried fiercely. "With dad already gone, isn't one victim enough, Walter? I can't marry you! I can't!"*



case, I wouldn't marry you with my eyes shut, so hadn't you better introduce me to some of those circumstances you're blahing about?"

"I came prepared to do so." He smiled faintly. "For what I saw the other day, darling, convinced me that you weren't the dutiful daughter your father and I believed you to be, and that it would take more than his well-known wishes plus my fervent love for you to make you see the light."

"Don't make me laugh," said Ellen scornfully. "Cut out the banana oil and talk English!"

"Only thing to do." He nodded. "Well, then, the bank's in serious trouble, Ellen. I'm sorry to have to tell you, but there's a shortage of over two hundred thousand dollars' worth of securities."

"You mean the bank's busted?" gasped the girl. "Dad's own bank that he was so proud of? But how could that happen! Isn't it up to you?" she demanded suddenly. "You were supposed to be dad's right hand there. How come you let Desmond & Company lose all that money? Oh, I knew something was the matter. Dad wasn't himself for weeks before he died! I knew he was worried to death, and no wonder!"

"No wonder," repeated Walter Fairborough with a tiny sneer. "The securities were missing, not lost in the way of business. Securities that belonged to customers and depositors, not to Desmond & Company."

"Meaning what?" asked Ellen in a frightened voice. "Do you mean they were stolen?"

"Oh, let's not use that word," he said glibly, spreading his hands. "Possibly not intentionally stolen, darling. Let's assume that they were merely taken to back up some outside account in a falling market

as collateral, if you know what that means, and failed to prove sufficient. So that they were lost."

"But—but," stammered Ellen, appalled, "how could you let that sort of thing happen? Answer that!"

"The answer to that is"—he fixed his cold eyes on her—"that your father alone kept the books and records relating to certain accounts and deposits of old family customers—a separate set of them. And that, with the securities I speak of, those books were always locked up in his own personal safe. I never had anything to do with them until he became ill."

Slowly the horror he was implying penetrated Ellen's frozen mind. Slowly she rose to her unsteady feet.

"You dare to suggest, Walter Fairborough," she choked, "that dad took—that he used and lost other people's money? If you do, you lie!"

"Of course, you feel that way," answered her persecutor, ignoring the insult. "I'd have felt the same way if I didn't have evidence to prove it. So I brought it to show you, Ellen."

He opened and spread on the table a bundle of papers. Ellen eyed them with fear and loathing.

"I don't care," she challenged desperately, "it isn't true! But these things—I couldn't understand them, anyway!"

"Others might," he suggested significantly.

"How do I know they're not faked?" the girl demanded, grasping at a last straw. "I wouldn't put it past you!"

Walter winced, but faced her with a mocking boldness.

"Don't be a fool, Ellen! Do you think I'd come to you with a story like this about your father and with



documents to prove it if it could be proved false? Would that be reasonable?"

Ellen looked at him long through eyes half blind with misery. Then her weak knees gave way and she dropped back into her chair.

"No, I don't believe you'd dare," she said at last. "You'd be afraid to. You'd know you couldn't get away with it."

"Right," he breathed heavily. "As you'll see when the inevitable investigation makes the facts public."

Ellen went rigid; and whiter, if possible.

"Investigation!" she breathed. "Oh, will everybody have to know what—that he did that? It will ruin us all; it will blacken his name forever; it will kill Isabel! Walter!" she cried piteously, clasping her hands in an agony of supplication. "Can't you stop it? Can't you do something so it won't be found out? I'll turn over everything I own, everything I can sneak away from Isabel without making her too suspicious! I'll give you the partnership dad promised you! I'll turn over the whole business to you! Oh, I'll do anything!"

"You've already refused me the partnership I asked for," said Walter with unmistakable significance. "The only one I care about!"

"I won't pretend to misunderstand you," Ellen whispered at last. "You mean about marrying you. But what good would that do you?" she demanded feverishly. "I'd only be another drag on you, one more liability!"

Walter Fairborough smiled with sudden reassurance.

"Nevertheless, darling, it's the one condition I'll make for trying to save your father's name and honor and the long-proud reputation of Des-

mond & Company. And, as you say, perhaps your mother's life."

"Are you absolutely heartless?" she cried fiercely. "With dad already gone, isn't one victim enough, Walter?"

"You don't seem to understand," he told her coldly, "that what you're asking me to do is to compound a felony, Ellen; to conceal a criminal breach of trust, a scandalous embezzlement on your father's part. That in itself is an act that would send me to jail for a long term in case of discovery. Nothing could induce me to run such a risk; nothing except love!"

The girl shuddered and buried her face in her hands.

"Oh, isn't there any other way?" she moaned. "I can't marry you, Walter! I can't!"

"The only alternative," he assured her brutally, "is for me to do my duty, to inform the authorities at once and expose the whole affair. You can imagine the publicity and the sensation, can't you?"

She moaned again, wordlessly.

"Afraid of winding up as the wife of a convict?" he drove his arrow deeper. "That's possible, of course. Still, Ellen, for the daughter of a criminal, aren't you a little too particular when you ask me to protect your father's name by also committing a felony and running the risk of prison, while at the same time you refuse to share the possible consequences to the extent of marrying me? What do you call that sort of conduct?"

She dropped her hands and looked straight at him.

"Are you sure that you could put it over?" she asked dully. "Keep it secret and make restitution in time?"

"With your coöperation in the business, and as my wife, yes." He



nodded. "Nothing has been discovered yet, even in the office. And those securities, the old-timers who left them in the care of Desmond & Company buried them as dogs bury their bones. They're not apt to start digging them up for a long time under present conditions."

"And you understand, Walter, that if I marry you, you're not to expect me to love you?" she added in a dead voice.

"I understand," he assented, only half suppressing an evil smile. "I shall be satisfied."

"Then," said Ellen in a voice of final despair, "you win, Walter."

No criminal ever welcomed a last-minute reprieve from the scaffold with more heartfelt fervor than did Ellen welcome the letter she received that night from Clifford Manning in Washington. It explained that the business that had taken him down there had been unexpectedly protracted, and that he might be kept there for a week or more. It implored her forgiveness for his further absence, offering to turn commuter and make some flying visits to New York overnight if she said the word.

Ellen replied at once with a brave bluff at apparent common sense, urging him to stay put and finish his affairs before returning. She told herself that to tell him her dreadful news by letter would not only seem cowardly, but would fail to convince him. Even though she realized that she could never explain, even to his face, the real cause of her heart-breaking disloyalty. Her father's dishonor must remain buried in the grave with him; she alone would have to bear the blame.

Thus the harrowing hour was postponed for a few more days. But it was all the worse when it fell upon her.

Cliff surprised her as he had surprised her that first time. He had her in his arms and was overwhelming her with a hurricane of joy and love almost before she knew he was in the house. And while his lips were still passionately repressing speech from her own, he seized her hand and slipped something onto it.

"There, my darling!" he said. "That'll hold you for a while, until I put the other one above it! Like it, my loveliest, my dearest?"

It was a stone of flawless beauty and brilliance, two carats of pure sunlight, aflame in a perfect platinum setting.

"Take it off!" gasped Ellen, writhing like a little animal caught in a trap and suffering more. "Oh, Cliff, I'm not—I—I can't marry you!"

Cliff was stunned. His arms dropped from her while he stared at her. Ellen staggered back from him, while with shaking fingers she plucked at the ring as if it were burning into her flesh. It fell to the floor between them.

"Ellen!" he choked.

"I—I'm going to marry Walter Fairborough," confessed Ellen in immeasurable anguish. "I can't help it."

"Going to marry Walter Fairborough," he repeated mechanically, almost too dazed to realize the full meaning of the words. "I don't understand!" Cliff drew a hand across his forehead as if to wipe away some nightmare shadow that was obscuring his senses.

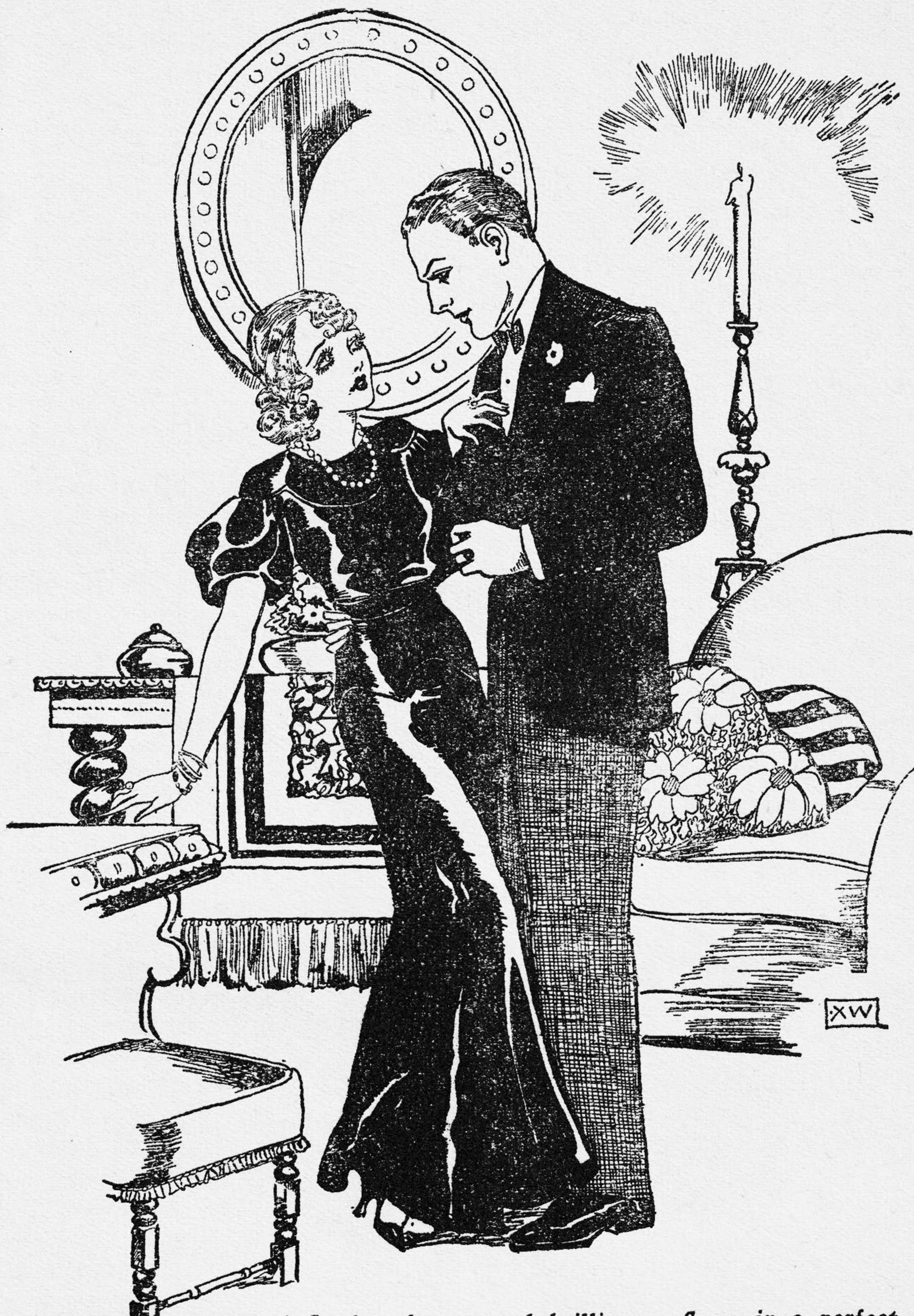
Ellen bowed her head.

"Going to marry Walter Fairborough!" Cliff reiterated, this time in a voice that clanged like a sword. "And how about me? How about your promise to marry me, Ellen?"

The girl wrung her hands speechlessly.

"Was that why you wrote me to





*It was a stone of flawless beauty and brilliance aflame in a perfect platinum setting that he slipped on her finger. "Take it off!" gasped Ellen. "Oh, Cliff, I'm not—I—I can't marry you!"*

stay away till I'd finished my business when I offered to run up here between times, just to see you?" he

flung at her with sudden and terrifying insight.

"Yes," she replied softly.



"So! And when did you decide you were going to marry Walter Fairborough?" he demanded fiercely, staring at her as if he still couldn't believe his ears.

"It was last Wednesday," the girl answered tonelessly. "But——"

"Two days after I left you!" exclaimed the man she loved, hoarsely. "Two days after he found you in my arms, kissing me as you said you'd never kissed a man before, as you never could kiss any man except the man you were going to marry. Remember that? Do you remember saying that, Ellen?"

Ellen made a pitiful little gesture of assent. Her obvious misery touched Cliff's heart and suggested a possible explanation.

"Oh, my dearest!" he cried, opening his arms to her. "Perhaps I understand! You've been forced into it! Your mother——"

"No! No!" Ellen broke in frantically, holding him off. "Isabel had nothing to do with it, Cliff; nothing! She believed I was going to marry you until I told her I'd changed my mind!"

Cliff stopped short, his heart sinking again.

"Then," he began, unwilling to relinquish even the faintest hope of the idea of compulsion, "is it on account of your father, Ellen? Because of what he wished?"

A panic seized her. She was afraid to touch on the subject of the dead. She didn't trust herself. Of what use would her terrible sacrifice be unless it were perfect, unless the secret of the

tragedy should remain confined to the only two living persons who knew it, herself and Walter Fairborough? She would have to press the crown of thorns down upon her own head, make it brutally plain to Cliff that she alone was responsible for her act of shameful infidelity.

"Nobody drove me, nobody even asked me to, except Walter himself," she responded with the flat finality of utter despair. "He came to me and asked me to marry him, and I told him I would. I—I had made a mistake."

She could see Cliff grow tense. He stooped and picked up the ring, to drop it in his pocket without looking at it. Then he smiled mockingly.

"And when and where does this treachery of yours get its reward, may I ask, Ellen? The wedding, I mean. Or haven't I the right to know?"

"A week from to-day, here," faltered Ellen, as if the words were racked out of her.

"In a week! When I was supposed to have to wait at least six months for you! But that was when you were assuring me that you loved me absolutely and forever!" he reminded her in a tone of savage sarcasm.

That broke her. She couldn't bear it.

"I did! I do!" cried Ellen in an extremity

of pain and grief. Oh, how could he be so cruel to her! If only he knew!

"Don't make me laugh," said Cliff scornfully. "I don't feel like it." And, turning, he left her.





"I do," responded Ellen dully in the same even, automatic voice she had used ever since the Reverend Mr. Dolbear had been introduced to her upon entering the house with the bridegroom.

The gentle little clergyman glanced at her again uneasily. She stood straight and motionless beside the man she was marrying. Her dark traveling costume might have clothed a wax dummy for all the motion her slender body imparted to it. Her wide eyes, seen only vaguely behind the half-length veil draped from the small, feathered hat, had looked only straight ahead from the beginning of the ceremony—not even at him, but through him. Her face, as far as he could see it, was wholly colorless. But then, all brides were pale. He supposed, though, that she should look pale; just as she should wear white satin.

"The ring," he had to whisper to the restless bridegroom, whose head turned nervously at the continued insistence of the bell that had sounded so demandingly for three long minutes in the depths of the house. The bride's mother, standing by the desk in the library, seemed at last annoyed. She turned her face toward the gray-haired old butler who, with the housekeeper, was serving as a witness, and nodded toward the door.

The butler bowed and obediently catfooted out of the room into the wide hallway. And at the same moment the sound of the bell was re-enforced by a plain and vehement pounding on the front door.

The Reverend Mr. Dolbear frowned. Only in case of fire should a solemn ceremony be thus disturbed, and it was strange that in a house like this precaution had not been taken against any such disturbance. But his business was to

finish marrying the pair before him. He looked pointedly toward the bride, who stood as still and motionless as if she heard nothing in this world. Then he reached toward her and touched her left hand. She raised it.

"With this ring," he began, prompting the bridegroom. Then his eyes fell again on the bride. "Please remove your glove," he whispered.

Ellen fumbled at it, and was just stripping it off when the heavy drapery at the door was suddenly and violently parted, to fall again behind the stern, tense figure of a man who was not the returning butler.

"Ellen!" he cried harshly. "Is it too late?"

All the emotion she had hitherto repressed swept over her, and she staggered against her father's desk, flinging back her short veil, her hand pressed to her madly-beating heart.

"Cliff!" she gasped. "Cliff!"

He strode forward with a single look at her, a grim glance at Walter Fairborough, and faced the Reverend Mr. Dolbear. The outraged little clergyman flushed.

"Whatever the cause, sir, it is nothing less than ill-mannered and indecorous to interrupt the solemn ceremony of marriage, which is a sacrament! I require you——"

"Interrupt? Then it isn't over? They're not married?" demanded Cliff with furious eagerness.

"No! You broke in at a critical juncture, sir!" sputtered Mr. Dolbear severely. "In another moment they——"

"Thank heavens! Ellen!" Cliff turned to her with arms outflung and a face filled with love and entreaty. "Oh, my darling Ellen, can you ever forgive me?"

Ellen straightened and stared at





him, a flame of hope rising and sinking in her cheeks.

"You love me?" she faltered. "You love me still?"

"Come!" he said. And she flung herself into his waiting arms.

The startled but angry bridegroom found his voice as his eyes flickered about the room and toward the door.

"Well, if that's the way of it, Ellen," he said viciously, "it's time I went! And you'll have only your-

self to thank for the public exposure of your dead father as an embezzler and a thief!"

Mrs. Desmond gave a faint cry of horror. Cliff whipped about, one arm still around Ellen, to smile grimly at his rival's departing back.

"Go ahead, Fairborough," he offered. "They're waiting for you

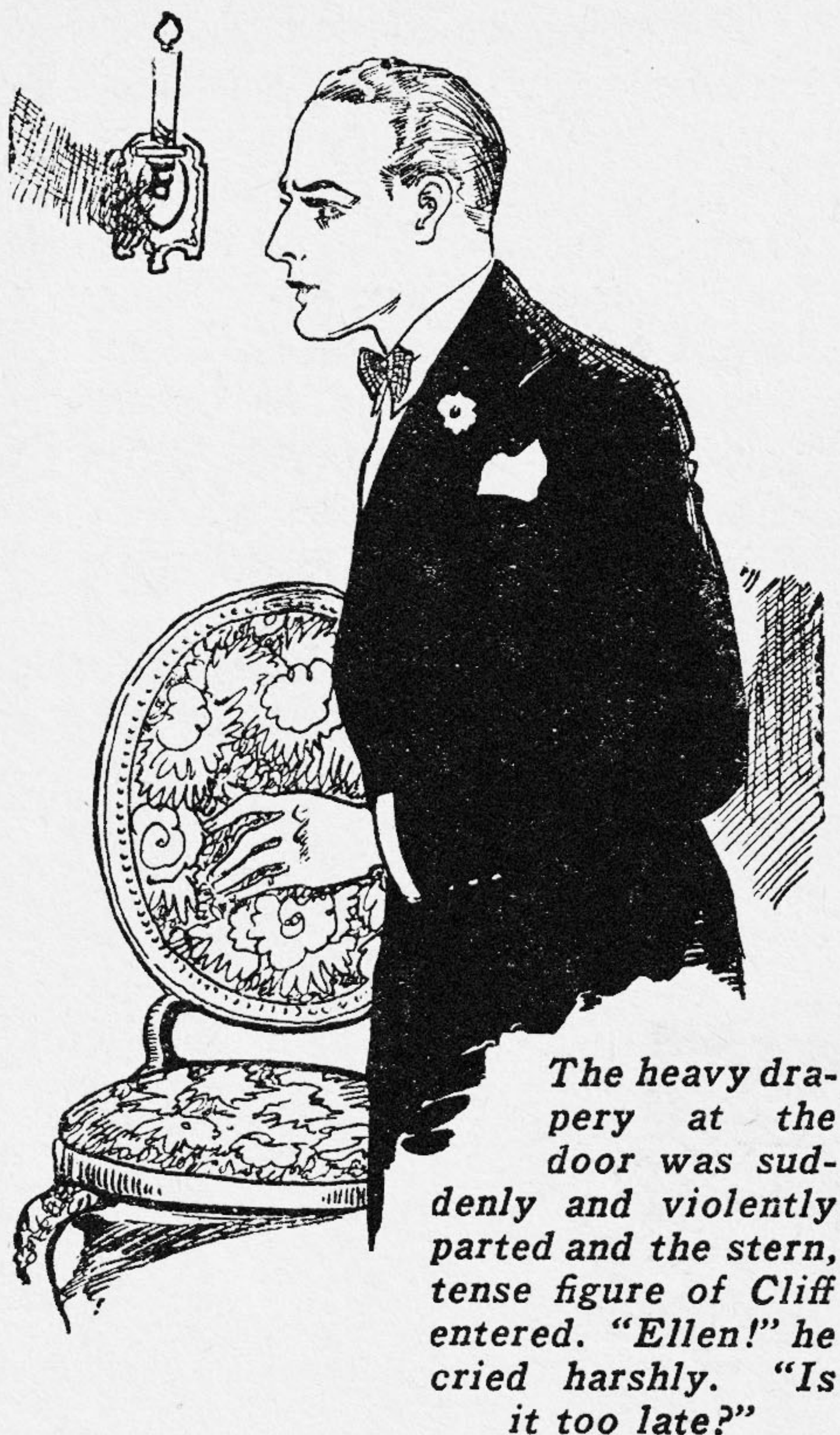
out in the hall, and it's a safe bet they've already found the stuff in your traveling bag."

Walter Fairborough stopped short, his face a sickly green.

"What?" gasped Ellen. "Cliff, what do you mean?"

"Thanks to Fairborough," Cliff grinned, "I guess I can tell you the





whole story now! If he hadn't made that threat to you just now, my darling, some of it might still be blind. Tell me, was that what he was holding over you, the threat to expose your father as a thief? To make every one believe the very worst of your father?"

Ellen trembled all over.

"That's why I had to promise to marry him," she answered faintly. "That's why—— Oh, it nearly killed me!"

"Why wouldn't it?" asked Cliff, crushing her to his heart. "Listen, sweet! I went to Desmond & Company the day after I saw you last," he flushed. "I admit, Ellen, I thought I was all through with Desmond & Company and anything or anybody pertaining to them. I was after some securities I'd left in your

father's personal care. Fairborough was forced to tell me that they weren't there, and told me what he must have told you. Naturally, he counted on my saying or doing nothing about it, because of my relations with the family and with you. He as much as told me so."

"The coward!" whispered Ellen against his heart.

"Well," smiled Cliff, his hard eyes fixing Walter over her head, "of course, I didn't believe him, knowing your father. And, considering this sudden marriage that I've just broken up, I was deeply suspicious of him. So I hired a couple of detectives to keep tabs on him. To make a long story short, sweetheart, they trailed him to a bank over in Queens this morning, where he emptied a safe-deposit box that had been hired in your father's name months ago. A forged signature, of course. Then he came directly here, bag, bonds, and baggage."

"Cliff, we were going to sail for Europe at six o'clock to-night!" breathed Ellen, her face pale and her eyes wide.

Walter suddenly grabbed Cliff's arm.

"Let me go," he begged hoarsely. "It's all there, every single cent of it! I was just piling up a stake, and if you send me up the river it'll only mean scandal for Desmond & Company. Let me go!"

"Let him go," whispered Ellen, turning her face away.

"Well, if it's all there," conceded Cliff. "I can't refuse you anything on your wedding day, darling. But don't let the parson go." He smiled as her face turned crimson. "Yes, I stopped and got a license."

He beckoned to Walter Fairborough and passed through the curtains, the self-betrayed and self-admitted embezzler following on



shaky legs. In three minutes Cliff was back in the library, and the front door was heard to open and close.

Cliff took the trembling, blushing girl by the arm and led her up to the Reverend Mr. Dolbear, who was exchanging awed whispers with Mrs. Desmond.

"I apologize with all my heart for interrupting you, reverend," Cliff said gravely. "The best I can do is to offer myself to help you complete the ceremony. But I'm afraid you'll have to start all over again."

The minister looked at Ellen for confirmation of this remarkable request. She nodded, too happy to speak, and smiled gloriously at him through tears of joy. The minister had to look at her again in an attempt to convince himself that this was the same bride as before. It wasn't. It was an entirely different bride. This one glowed and shimmered like the moon with love and happiness.

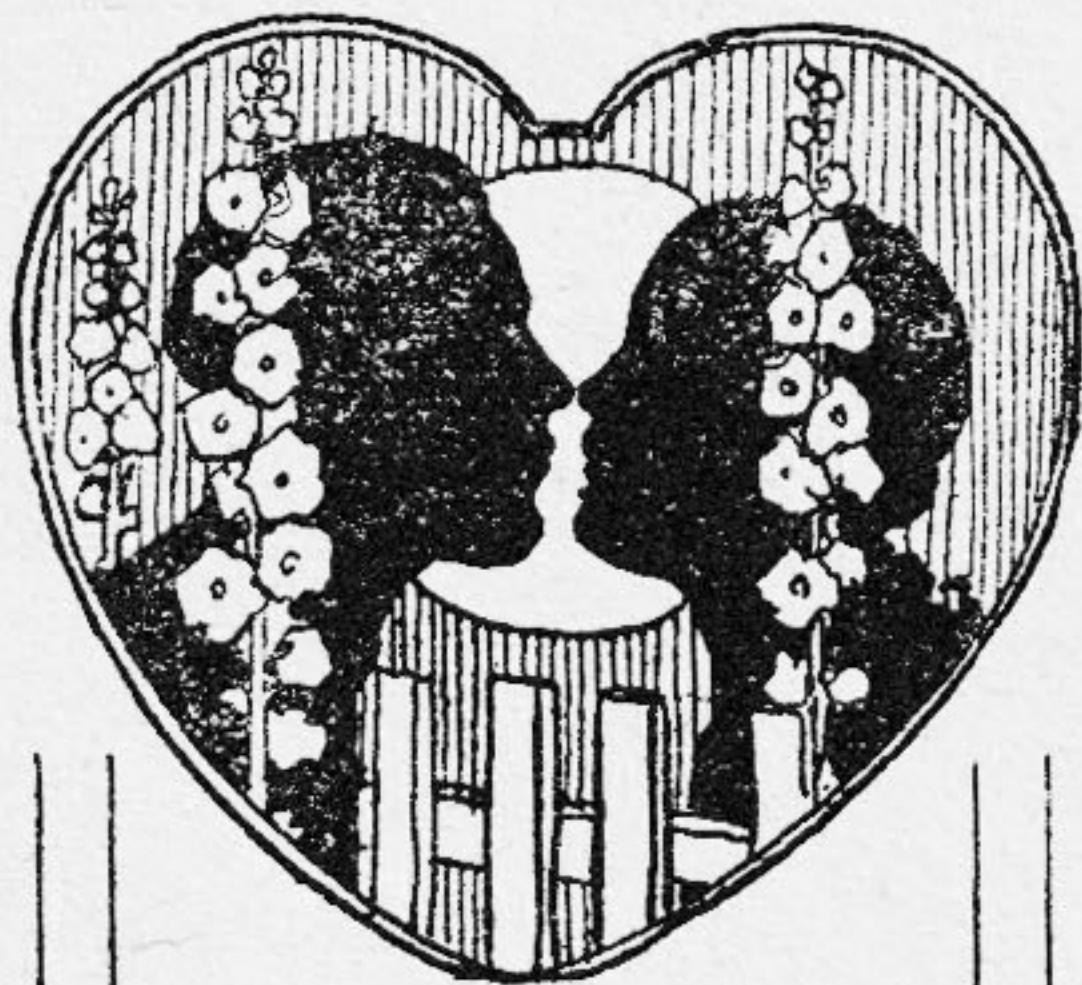
"Dearly beloved," he began, while Ellen smiled happily at the man she loved.



**J**ILL COOPER had not been born with a silver spoon in her mouth; neither had she gone to fashionable finishing schools nor been introduced to society by socially-prominent parents. Jill earned her own living and had to fight hard for most everything that she got. But Jill was true-blue and when she gave her heart to a man, she meant it. There was no playing at love for Jill. When she met and fell in love with Guy Clifford, wealthy society man, she thought that she had at last found heaven on earth. But life treats girls like Jill in a hard fashion and she soon found that happiness was not yet to be hers.

You'll want to read this story, "Tencent Love," which is Maysie Greig's latest, and which begins in next week's issue of this magazine. Order your copy from your news dealer now.





## Splendid Night

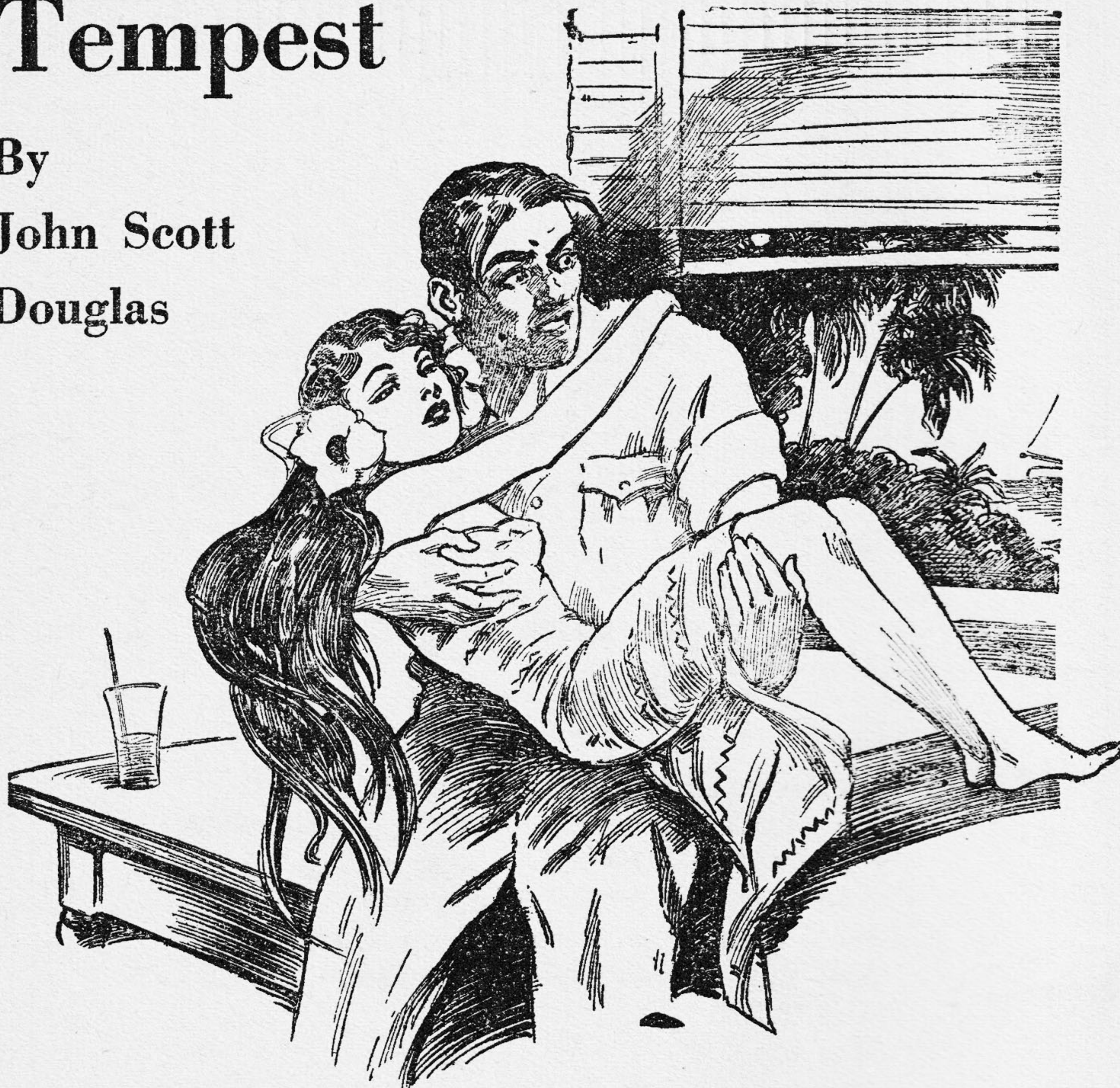
*By* PETER A. LEA

THE moon was white, and there  
Was magic in the air that splendid night,  
And loveliness to share—  
And I remember too, that you  
Were keen to dare the trail up where  
You said the stars seemed nearer,  
And that I,  
Was too content with things  
Just as they were, to try  
To change them, or to make the beauty clearer—  
Strange, isn't it, that these rememberings  
Drift to and fro—and do you know  
The moon is white again to-night?  
It gives me much to ponder on—  
Suppose, suppose that we had gone!



# Tempest

By  
John Scott  
Douglas



**S**TOP here!" Cicily Turner directed Cort Stuart breathlessly. All unconscious of the beautiful picture she presented to the admiring eyes of the man who stood beside her on the polished deck of the *Moraa*, Cicily breathed deeply of the soft breeze whispering through the palm trees on the shore, bringing her the heavy scents of jasmine, acacia, and hibiscus. The girl's sun-tanned cheeks were flushed with excitement as her eager blue eyes swept from the sunset sky, which burnished the water like hammered bronze, to the waving palm trees on the point of the lagoon.

The rough-hewn young giant stared down at her honey-hued head, smiling sadly. Cort Stuart's gray eyes were melancholy, and lines of anxiety furrowed his rugged, bronzed face.

"You want me to put you ashore here to surprise him?"

Cicily nodded gayly, gripping his arm. "Come on, snap out of it, Cort! It's no funeral—it's my marriage! Bob Rudrig's house is beyond that point, isn't it? Well, I'll run along the beach and give him the surprise of his life."

Cort's eyes were bleak. "Sometimes surprises——"





*Cicily's heart froze at what she saw. Bob, in rumpled white ducks, his face black-bearded, held a native girl in his arms. Hatred flashed in the girl's narrowing eyes as she looked at Cicily.*

The girl tossed her blond head as she interrupted: "Nonsense! You've seen Bob only twice. Why is there always condemnation in your voice when you speak of some one you scarcely know?"

Cort's wide, humorous mouth tightened imperceptibly, and he shrugged. When he faced the sunset sky, the lines had deepened in his face.

Cicily thought she understood. How could a man be fair to a rival when he was in love with that rival's sweetheart? Jealousy would color any opinion he might form!

"It's just ten days since I picked

you up at Papeete, Cicily. Ten days of bliss and torture for me. Bliss because I love you; torture because I'm taking you to your fiancé. Maybe I'm prejudiced, but I can't see you married to Bob Rudrig. You and he were high-school sweethearts. You haven't seen him in six years, since he inherited this island of Tongo-Tahu from his uncle."

"But I loved him then, Cort. And I do now!"

He shook his curly brown head. "At sixteen you were too young to form judgment for a girl of twenty-two. Your parents objected to your marrying him then. But now, after not seeing him for six years, you've come down to the South Seas to be his bride. Pretty risky, isn't it? Perhaps I'd better stick around for a day or so in case you change your mind."

"Do you think I'd go back to the States, admitting I'm wrong?" she flared. "When I know darn well I'm not, Mr. Moralist!"

His strong, handsome face relaxed in a pale smile. "I'd never admit any man was good enough for you, Cicily! Perhaps that's my trouble!"

"You're a dear, Cort! When I reached Papeete, I had misgivings about making a ten-day trip with a strange white man. But you've been a prince!"

He winced. "If you'd given me the slightest encouragement, I'm afraid I'd have borne you off to the nearest missionary. Married you!"

She caught the hurt in his voice, saw it in his shadowed eyes.

"You've been awfully sweet, Cort. You'll always share a wee corner of my heart, though Bob will be my



'one and only.' Now, be an angel and put the boat ashore before I begin to cry."

A tortured smile quirked his mouth. "Right-o!"

He rattled off some words in a native Tahitian dialect. Two brown Polynesians lowered an outrigger into the water, where it rocked gently on the glassy swells.

As he helped her into the boat, Cicily couldn't fail to see the whiteness of his trembling lips or the haunting sadness of his gray eyes.

She waved to him as the outrigger scudded across the burnished waters. He waved once; then, quite suddenly, he entered the pilot house.

Cicily wondered about this fine-looking young copra trader. In Papeete it was rumored he had grown wealthy by trading. She judged from snatches of conversation that he had traveled all over the world, but had found his niche in the South Seas.

Thoughts of Cort Stuart were driven from her mind as the outrigger plunged through the booming surf. Kekela lifted her in his arms, depositing her with a flash of white teeth on the beach.

Cicily thanked the boy, asking him to bring her bags to the house later. Both Tahitians nodded.

She ran along the white sand. Her face fell upon seeing a dilapidated, sun-bleached house set under drooping palms.

"It's the weather," she decided. "Perhaps heavy rains and hot suns make it impossible to keep a house looking presentable."

A good half hour's walk brought her to the unkempt lawn. The house was so forbiddingly silent that Cicily paused before the screen door. What if Bob were away?

Girlish laughter abruptly shattered the silence. From within came

sounds of scuffling, hoarse chuckling, another tinkling laugh.

Cicily hesitated. Then, summoning her courage, she crossed the porch silently and opened the door. Her heart froze at what she saw.

A huge, flabby man in rumpled white ducks held a native girl in his arms. Dressed in tapa cloth, the girl's brown legs were bare, and her black hair streamed almost to the floor. She laughed up into the man's black-bearded face, her dancing black eyes mischievous and provocative.

For a moment Cicily failed to recognize the thick features, the purpled jaw, or the tousled black hair of the man. Then she did, and that recognition staggered her.

"Bob!"

The man turned red-rimmed brown eyes at her. No recognition stirred in their blank depths for several endless seconds, and then the dark jaw sagged. He dropped the girl onto the floor.

"Perhaps that'll teach you to do your work!" he growled.

Hatred flashed in the girl's narrowing eyes as she rose on trembling limbs. Hatred for Cicily.

"Go!" Bob roared at her, pushing her toward the rear door.

The native girl uttered a single venomous epithet, unintelligible to Cicily. Bob Rudrig took a step toward her, and she fled.

He smiled sheepishly; a grimace which froze Cicily's heart.

"What's the meaning of—of this?" she demanded vibrantly.

He threw back his tousled head, laughing uproariously. "Jealous?"

She shuddered. "Did I come here to see you make love to a native?"

He sobered suddenly. "Make love? How absurd! Fetia wasn't doing her work. I was—well, trying to scare her."



Cicily's blue eyes were cold. "She didn't look frightened!"

He laughed harshly, advancing toward her. "Let's not quarrel, beautiful! Why didn't you let me know you were coming?"

She shrank from him as she would from a wild beast.

"I did write. But when you failed to meet me at Papeete, I—I couldn't wait. I came up in the *Moroa*."

His red-rimmed eyes grew small. "Cort Stuart's boat? Has he——"

"—made love to me? No; *he* was every inch a gentleman!"

His clenched, hairy fists twitched. "Is that the truth?"

Cicily's eyes brimmed. "Bob Rudrig! Gone native!"

He stiffened as though he'd been struck. "Forgive me," he muttered. "But I can't help being jealous. You're so beautiful, Cicily. More beautiful even than I remembered you being!"

His face softened as he approached. Involuntarily she drew back.

"Bob," she said brokenly, "I can't kiss you after—after——" Her voice broke. "The look in Fetia's eyes! She loves you; you love her. Why did you ask me to come out here? Why, oh, why?"

"You little silly! You don't believe there's anything between us, do you? You'll learn! These natives need discipline!"

Her blue eyes flashed. "You discipline—with kisses?"

"That's discipline for her! She loves one of my native boys."

Cicily turned toward the windows. Her heart seemed dead; tears filled her eyes.

"I've come thousands of miles to marry you, Bob," she said dully. "I did it because I trusted you. My family objected; they made no bones

about disliking you. They wouldn't even give me the money to come here. I had to earn it, dollar by dollar, as a stenographer. And when I arrived and ran along the beach with joy in my heart to surprise you, I was the one to be surprised."

"Darling!"

"Don't kiss me, Bob! I must think. And I can't think in your arms. You—you do something to me. Even yet!"

"You were meant for me. Don't let a kiss spoil things!"

"It wasn't your kissing Fetia! It was the way she looked at you; the way she looked at me. If that isn't love—jealousy——"

"You're imagining things!" he interrupted.

She laughed—a laugh lacking mirth. "Perhaps I'd better face the ridicule of Stanton! Playing second fiddle to a native isn't what I came out here for."

"You'll never play second fiddle to any one where I'm concerned!"

She shrugged as Nuva and Kekela entered the room with her bags.

"Where's my room, Bob?"

"There's only one bedroom." He shifted uneasily. "It may be some time before a missionary drops in here so that we can be legally married."

"We haven't decided that yet!" she said curtly. "I'll feel safer in the bedroom for the present. That girl!"

When her bags had been deposited in the bedroom, he started to follow her. She smiled enigmatically and closed the door. She spent as much time as she could changing her clothes and freshening up after her long voyage. Then she dropped onto the bed, cupping her aching head in her hands. What should she do? Return to the States to face the ridicule of the townspeople for



being a rejected bride? Or try to make the best of things?

The fires of love Bob Rudrig had once kindled now flickered low. His explanation about the native girl wasn't convincing. Yet there might be circumstances she couldn't comprehend. The seductive lure of the tropics, perhaps? What she failed to understand was his brutality to Fetia. Would Bob in time come to treat his wife like that?"

He knocked. "Dinner's ready, beautiful."

It was another Bob Rudrig she confronted. Now clean-shaven, he wore a freshly pressed suit of white duck, and his black hair was neatly combed. But his rejuvenation failed to hide the rolls of paunchy flesh under his red-rimmed eyes or the general flabbiness of what had once been a hard, strong body. At twenty-four he had the figure of forty. He lacked Cort's clean, hard fitness.

His ardent brown eyes still stirred small answering fires in her heart, however, as they sat down. The table stood beside a window facing the glistening lagoon with its dense fringe of lush, tropical verdure.

He smiled at her. "You'll love it here, sweet. Whispering winds through the fronds of the palms, the heady scent of acacia and hibiscus, lazy days on languid waters."

She laughed, her heart feeling very full. "You wrote me those things, Bob. But now they seem so much more real!"

Her gesture included the skyward-sweeping heights rising from the blue lagoon, the red sun setting behind a dark palm, the frigate birds and the carmine tropic birds whirling above the coral reef.

"Tongo-Tahu will be paradise with you here, beautiful," he whispered. "I'll make love to you under

a palm tree while the Southern Cross hangs like a string of brilliants in the sky and the jungle chants an accompaniment to my words."

She dimpled, her heart swelling. "You persuade me!"

"You'll stay!" he said confidently. "You'll learn to love it."

Fetia entered with a bamboo tray. Hostility burned in her black eyes. She set a dish before Cicily, another before Bob. He changed dishes, picked up a fork, and started to eat. The girl stared at him, wide-eyed, open-mouthed. Then suddenly she knocked the fork from his hand.

Bob sprang to his feet, his hand raised toward Fetia. She shrank back against the wall, fear filling her eyes. Then suddenly something silver flashed in her hand and she sprang toward Cicily.

Bob roared at her and caught her by the wrist before she could plunge the sharp knife into Cicily. He held her with both hands while he called loudly for a boy, who appeared and dragged the girl into the kitchen.

Cicily was on her feet now, her face deathly white.

"What does this mean?"

"Poison!" Bob said succinctly. "I changed dishes with you to see!"

A hurt smile twitched Cicily's red mouth. "And she doesn't love you?"

"Of course not! That's just their way! Jealous of strangers!"

Cicily laughed brittlely, and the room swung before her eyes like a pendulum. "Bob, I won't believe that! She tried to poison me; then to knife me. Why? Because you belong to her! I'm leaving here!"

"You can't leave without my permission, and I won't give it. This is my island. No one either lands or leaves here unless I say so!"

Her eyes widened incredulously. "You—you rotter!"

He realized he had gone too far.



"Listen; I'm just trying to bring you to your senses before it's too late! I'll send Fetia away."

"Have the boy bring me something which isn't poisoned," she said coolly. She had no appetite now, but she needed time to plan.

When they moved onto the screened porch, their conversation was very strained. Both covered thoughts with meaningless words.

Finally Cicily arose. "I'm going to bed, Bob. I'm tired."

Suddenly he drew her close, covering her face with rough kisses. His hot breath stifled her, her heart pounded wildly. She dug her nails into his face, pushing him away.

She stood facing him, breathing heavily, defying him. Her pulses throbbed, and her heart was in her throat as he gazed at her with hungry eyes.

"Listen," he said huskily, "why wait until a missionary comes? The few words he can say will make no difference in our feelings."

"None!" she said fiercely. "None at all!"

"Then——" He advanced toward her.

"Don't touch me!" she exploded. "You beast!"

But he seized her in his arms again. Something in his eyes terrified her. She beat his face as he pressed hot, damp kisses on her throat. A loathing swept over her.

She dug her nails into his eyes. As he released her, she sprang back.

Bob Rudrig laughed triumphantly. "You lit-



*Hostility burned in Fetia's black eyes. Suddenly something silver flashed in her hand and she sprang toward Cicily. Bob roared at her and caught her by the wrist before she could plunge the sharp knife into Cicily.*



tle vixen! Do you imagine that will do you any good?"

Barring her way to the living room, he laughed coarsely. Loathing for him swept over her in sickening waves. She ran a shaking hand through her shorn amber locks to rub the numbness from her head. She saw Bob now for the first time as he really was. Coarse, uncouth, brutal.

Her whirling mind steadied as she suddenly thought of Cort Stuart. Remembrance of his wistful gray eyes, his strong, handsome face set her chilled heart to tingling again. He had said he would lay off the island of Tongo-Tahu to see if she had changed her mind. How well he had judged Bob Rudrig!

As Bob came toward her again, two things clarified in Cicily's mind. First, she had never loved this man who faced her. A girl of sixteen had mistaken hero worship for love, but it was doubtful if that girl could have felt even hero worship for the man Bob Rudrig had become. Second, she knew she loved Cort Stuart with all her heart, though she had not known it with certainty until Bob had kissed her.

Without a backward glance, Cicily sprang through the screened door and ran toward the rickety dock. Bob thundered after her and gripped her arm savagely. She turned on him with blazing eyes, but he imprisoned both her small hands in his.

"Cort!" The words sprang from her stricken heart. "Cort, help me!"

Bob's damp hand covered her mouth. He dragged her into the bedroom and flung her into a chair. He stared at her through narrowed lids for a moment where she sat, panting, gazing up at him with wide, frightened eyes. Then he walked out, locking the door behind him.

For a long time there was silence in the house. Cicily crept to the barred window. Moonlight silvered the water, and palm trees were silhouetted against the lagoon in black relief.

Two figures moved toward the beach. Cicily's body stiffened as the pair passed from the deep shadows into the white moonlight. Bob! Bob and Fetia!

A sob caught in Cicily's throat. Her rival! Bob had asked her to come halfway around the world to him while all the time he had been making love to this half-civilized girl! And Cicily was expected to believe in him!

The moonlight brought an ache to her heart. How many times she and Cort had sat on the deck of the *Moroa* while the moonlight had streamed across the glistening calmness of the sea! How many times he had spoken words of love in his songs; songs sung in a voice which was like tears in your throat! She had known then in her heart, and had fought against that knowledge as unloyal to Bob.

But Bob had proved that loyalty unmerited. Yet he held her prisoner, and he would continue to hold her by force until she yielded to his will. Not having any word from her, Cort would sail the next day, and she would be without a friend on this savage South Sea atoll.

A light tapping on her door awoke her from the stupor and caused her heart to stand still. She jumped to her feet, her body rigid. "Who is it?" she faltered.

"Cort," answered the soft, rich voice she loved.

Her heart beat wildly, and her eyes stung with tears. She was locked in—a prisoner. Her voice trembled as she explained.



A moment of silence; then: "Stand back, darling."

*Darling!* Her pulses throbbed at his use of the word.

She stepped back, and the door creaked on its hinges as Cort Stuart hurled himself against it.

The door finally gave way, and Cort fell against her. Color flooded her cheeks as he caught her in his arms. Her heart pounded until it was hard to breathe.

His rugged, bronzed face was anxious. "Sweet one, did I hurt you?"

A faint little smile hovered on her red lips. "No, Cort. You would never hurt me."

He released her, deep color creeping up under the bronze of his skin. "I—I thought I heard you call."

A lump rose in her heart. "I tried to escape. Bob—that girl!"

Cort's face hardened. "I've seen Rudrig twice. I tried to warn you; it was the bitterest pill I've ever swallowed, seeing you come here. You were so certain he was a gentleman that I tried to persuade myself I must be mistaken."

She shuddered. "It was I who was mistaken! Take me away, Cort. Anywhere! I never want to see him again!"

He looked down into her full eyes in a way which made her suddenly feel shy. Her senses reeled, and she closed her eyes. His warm lips touched her closed eyelids, and she trembled in his arms.

"Darling," he said huskily, "won't you marry me? I've loved you from the first. That sweet, serious little smile of yours. Your honey hair, your speaking eyes, your beckoning lips. I want to care for you, protect you, give you the things you deserve."

She opened her eyes to look into his grave, earnest face. Fire flowed through her veins when their eyes

met and locked for a long moment of understanding. It seemed that she could feel his heart pounding against hers. She felt that their hearts met and entwined in that moment, and that their message was one.

She laughed—a shaken little laugh. "I do trust you, Cort. Take me away. I am your woman; your love. Be good to me, my darling. Be good to me and I will try to give you happiness."

He laughed brokenly. "Make me happy, dear heart? It is happiness to hear your voice, to look into your eyes, to see you smile. You are all happiness to me, and I thought I had lost you."

Their lips met. Flames leaped through her body, robbing her of strength. She clung to him, marveling in his strongness and firmness. Cort—her Cort!

He released her, looking down into her starry eyes. "We must go now," he said. "Rudrig may return at any time."

She shivered slightly and nodded. They hurried down to the outrigger with her bags. Cort's boys lifted them into his dugout, and they squared off from the little dock. A milky path of phosphorescence stirred behind their dugout as Cicily dropped with a glad little sigh into the hollow of Cort's arm. He held her close, kissing her soft hair.

"Soon we will be safe," he whispered.

But he spoke too soon. The staccato crack of a pistol shattered the musical chant of the jungle. Sitting up, Cicily saw a white puff of smoke on the shore. Bob Rudrig!

A blinding flash of light pierced the smoke puff. Kekela uttered a low moan, dropping into the bow. Cort moved quickly to the side of the fallen boy.



"Kekela is unconscious!" he snapped. "Only a shoulder wound, luckily!"

Three more hastily aimed bullets whined above the skimming outrigger.

"We can reach the *Moroa* before they can overtake us, unless Rudrig kills Nuva. Then, with a long-range rifle, I'll give him a taste of his own medicine if he's looking for trouble."

Natives jumped into outriggers at the dock. A cold chill settled over Cicily's heart.

Suddenly the soft purr of a motor filled the air.

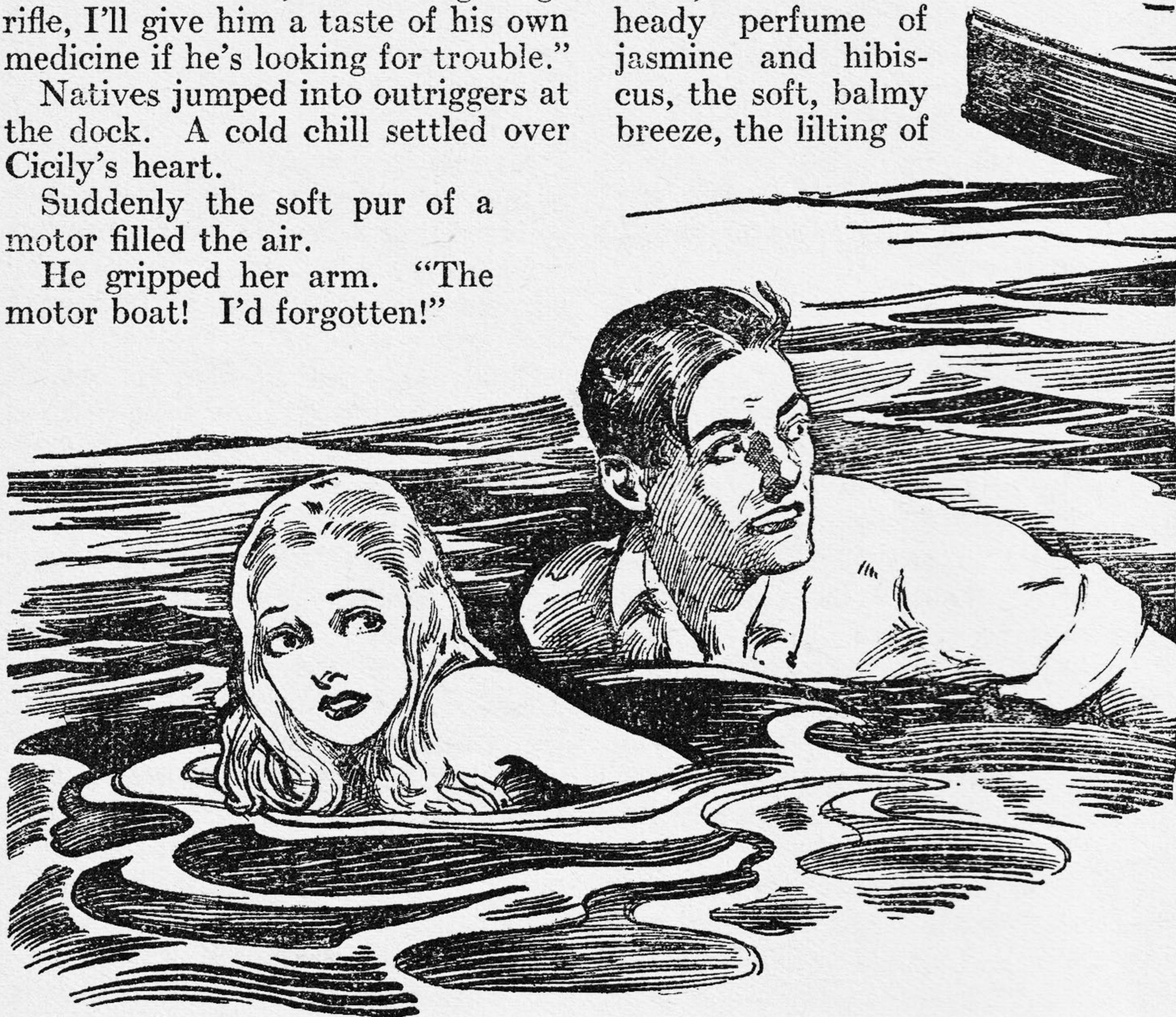
He gripped her arm. "The motor boat! I'd forgotten!"

"Whatever happens, Cicily, remember I loved you."

His words were like an acknowledgment of impending doom.

She raised imperious lips. "Kiss me, darling," she said simply.

He drew her close, his lips against hers. Emotion surged up in her heart, and her head whirled. The heady perfume of jasmine and hibiscus, the soft, balmy breeze, the lilting of



*Suddenly a fin cleft the surface. A shark fin! The world spun crazily before Cicily's pain-filled eyes. She screamed once. Bob Rudrig turned and then swam frantically away from her.*

Cicily's blue eyes widened. "You mean he'll overtake us?"

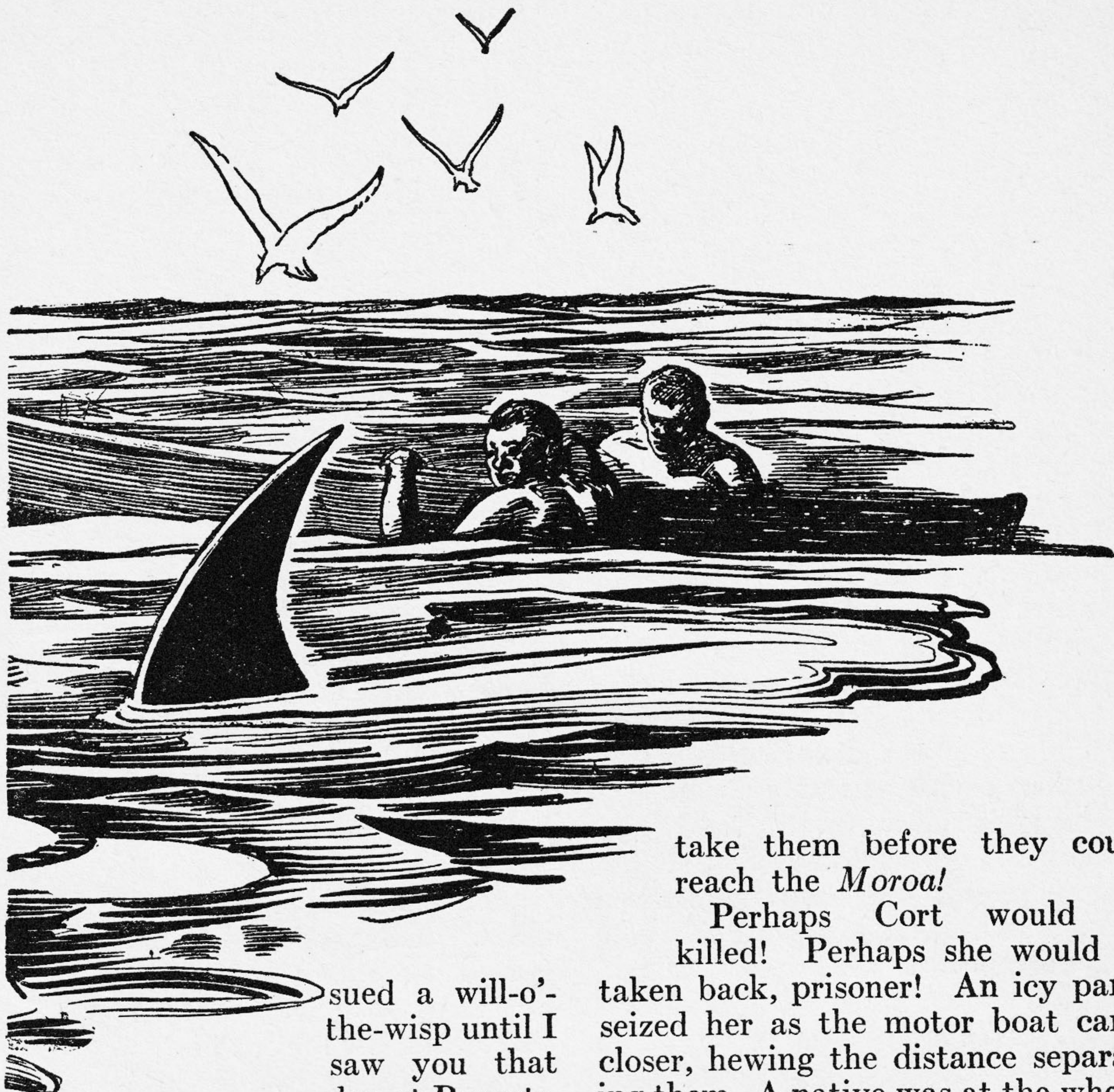
Cort's mouth hardened, and he nodded. "If Kekela hadn't dropped his paddle overboard, I might have helped. But with only one paddler——" His arm tightened about her shoulders and drew her close.

the ripples against the outrigger were all part of that kiss. A sob tore at her throat.

"Cort, darling, I never knew what it was to love!"

"Nor I, my sweet! My wanderings have carried me everywhere to find such a love. I thought I pur-





sued a will-o'-the-wisp until I saw you that day at Papeete. A vision in blue! I felt a little giddy when I looked into your eyes; either dreams had come true, or truth had gone dreaming—I didn't quite know which."

Her eyes were glistening and starry in the light of the silver moon.

"And I didn't know," she mused with a little catch in her voice. "Not until Bob kissed me! Then it came over me that it was you."

He squeezed her hand, facing to the stern of the vibrating outrigger. The motor boat roared toward them, flames spitting from its exhaust as it sliced open the glassy surface in two white folds.

Cicily read their fate in Cort's stern, rugged face. Bob would over-

take them before they could reach the *Moroa*!

Perhaps Cort would be killed! Perhaps she would be taken back, prisoner! An icy panic seized her as the motor boat came closer, hewing the distance separating them. A native was at the wheel. Bob Rudrig shouted orders which were obliterated by the roaring crescendo of the boat's motor.

The boat cut to the right, then swung abruptly toward them.

"He's going to smash into us!" Cort cried hoarsely.

He crawled to the unconscious boy's side. Silver glinted in his hand.

"Kekela's knife! If worst comes to worst, use it!"

Cicily gripped his arm. "He's coming on!"

"Brace yourself!"

The motor boat seemed to fly toward them with the speed of a projectile. Cicily clung to Cort, clenching her teeth.



There was a crash and a raucous splintering, tearing and crunching of wood.

Cicily's mind went blank from the concussion, to be restored by the sharp shock of the cold water.

Two portions of the outrigger were sinking in the moon's path. Nuva and the now conscious Kekela swam toward the larger portion; Cort dived from the smaller. Sounds caused Cicily to turn. Bob Rudrig was swimming toward her! Standing, he had been knocked into the water also by the impact. And he was twenty feet nearer than Cort.

Suddenly a fin cleft the surface between herself and Cort Stuart. A shark fin! The world spun crazily before her pain-filled eyes. She screamed once. Bob Rudrig turned and then swam frantically away from her, crying hoarsely at the boy in the approaching motor boat.

Cort had once told her that sharks seldom molest men swimmers when women swimmers are present. The remembrance of his words flashed into her mind now with stunning shock. Whether true or not, the shark showed no intention of pursuing Bob Rudrig.

Her body was numb with a paralyzing terror while her brain swam feverishly. As in a dream, she remembered the warm pressure of Cort's lips on hers. She turned to look at him for the last time. And what she saw sent chills coursing down her spine.

His curly brown head was close to that fin, and the knife he had taken from Kekela was descending in a streak of silver. He was giving his life for hers! The man-eater was suddenly galvanized into tons of frenzied energy as Cort's knife plunged into the gray side. Its tail thrashed the water into diamond points of greenish-white light as it

whirled over to attack. For an instant she glimpsed the brilliant trail of its passage through the water.

Then it broke the surface again, its tail thrashing. Clark still clung to a fin, his knife plunging—plunging—plunging!

The thirty-foot man-eater beat the water into gleaming swirls as it descended again. White lamps of phosphorescence spun through the water as the shark slashed with its terrible tail. Blood flecked the surface. She could see man and shark outlined in silver below her, and a lump rose in her throat to choke her.

"Cort, my darling!" She formed the words with white lips.

The shark's trail of greenish-white light formed an arc under her as it rose, thrashing violently now in the throes of death. And she could see Cort's knife plunging into the silver-lighted side as he clung to a fin, always avoiding the slashing tail, which would mangle him with a blow. Thousands of pounds of crazed, turbulent energy seeking to kill the man she loved! And Cort had risked his life for her!

Suddenly she saw the dying monster descending into the depths, and a silver body detached itself and fought upward to fill bursting lungs with air. Cort had won! Panting from the struggle, he yet managed a smile.

"Darling," he gasped huskily, "I was so afraid for you."

The motor boat drew up alongside them, Rudrig intending to seize Cicily. But Cort jerked the white man into the water and knocked him out with a blow on the chin. With the owner of the motor boat unconscious, the native driver was completely cowed. He transported them back to the *Moroa*.

On the copra boat there was once more activity. Kekela, Nuva, and



the other natives hoisted sails, preparatory to sailing.

Cicily trembled in Cort's arms. She was unable to blot out the memory of what his fate might have been, and it seemed to her that he would ever be dearer to her for so nearly having lost him.

Cort kissed her—a long, lingering kiss. "What is behind us is a nightmare, sweet one," he said gently. "A tempest we can forget when the seas grow calm again. Ahead lies the iridescent stuff of which dreams are made. Green, wooded islands with rushing cataracts in their sides; blue lagoons and bluer seas;

a good boat and fresh breezes playing through the rigging. A chance to forget the misfortune which might have overtaken you in the tempest; a chance for love to bloom in God's loveliest setting, the South Seas; a chance, darling, that you and I are going to take."

Her trembling body grew quiet. She became conscious of his strong arm supporting her. She turned a radiant face up to his.

"The *Moroa's* our love boat," she said with sudden ecstasy. "Let it always have fair sailing, loved one."

And, his lips on hers, Cort echoed her wish.



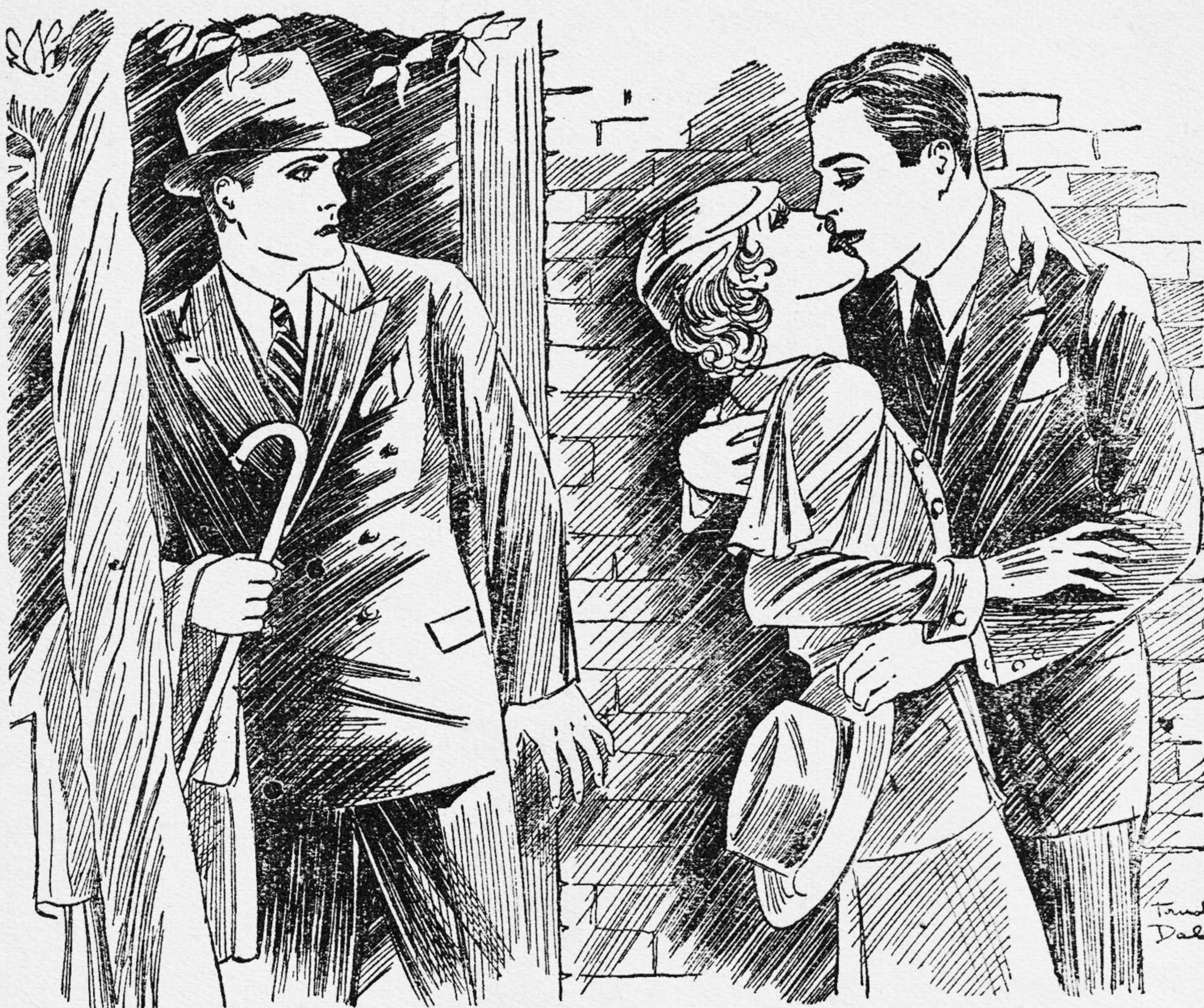
### I CANNOT FORGET YOU

I CANNOT forget you and often return  
 To the path through the sweet-scented heather,  
 Which leads to the mill and the deep-flowing stream  
 That reflected us standing together,  
 Your head on my breast and my heart to your own,  
 And our arms enlaced like the roses,  
 Or lime blooms that drip the sweetest perfumes,  
 When the passion of Junetide closes.

I cannot forget you and think of you now  
 As I stand in the eventide ashen,  
 While a thrush in the lime tree exultingly sings  
 The music of requited passion.  
 The meadowsweet shakes in the breeze's embrace,  
 The moon and the stream are united;  
 And I long to fold you again in my arms,  
 And renew all the vows we once plighted.

FRANKLIN PIERCE CARRIGAN





# Kisses Of Scorn

By Sarah Dawson

## CHAPTER I.

**J**'UDY, my dear, he'll play with girls like you, but he'll never marry outside of his own class."

Judy Tarrant stirred uneasily as the words her mother had spoken that morning came back to her to haunt and mock her again.

She stood at the top of the hill and stared at the town nestling in the hollow, thinking how drab it was, with the narrow streets and big

factories; the town from which she had longed to escape ever since she had been old enough to realize how much she hated it.

But the drab monotony of life went on day after day, until that morning when Clive Darrington walked into the big office at the

factory, and Judy had caught his eyes fixed upon her with unfeigned interest.

After that there had been the annual factory dance, the thrill of

*A Novelette.*



which, she told herself, she would remember all her life.

She had danced with Clive Darrington, and later he had driven her home. Since then there had been frequent meetings and drives in his car, and he had bought her expensive presents of candy and flowers.

Judy had lived in a wonderful dream of happiness until her mother's warning had struck a little arrow of fear into her heart.

Suppose her mother was right? She was only an ordinary working girl, and Clive Darrington was wealthy, the son of her employer. One day he would be the owner of the big factory. Was it possible that his attentions could mean anything to a girl like herself?—Judy wondered.

She brushed a tear from her eye. Perhaps, after all, she had better not see him again. There was another man who wanted to marry her—Ralph Holden, the production manager of the factory, who had lately inherited a small amount of money. He had said he would make her happy. Would it not be better to marry him than risk heartbreak with a man who was probably only amusing himself?

A cold wind swept over the hill, blowing Judy's scarf gayly around her. A pale-gold wisp of hair escaped from her under jaunty red *bêret* and danced across her cheek. She brushed it away impatiently. She was so absorbed in her thoughts that she did not notice the car that was rapidly coming up the hill.

Her mother's warning!

It had been like a blow, shattering her dreams. For the past week she had gone to bed, only to dream of the man with whom she had fallen madly in love. She had pressed her lips to the flowers he had given her, whispering the words of love he

would never hear into their fragrant hearts. And she had dreamed things that now she realized could never be.

"Why, Judy! I never expected to find you up here!"

Judy turned, startled, to find the man of whom she had been thinking close beside her.

The swift color rushed to her face, and she felt her heart throbbing fast.

"I've just been over to Benson's garage," he told her, without waiting for her to speak. "When I saw you in the glare of the headlights, I could scarcely believe my eyes. Why did you tell me you had a date to-night?"

Again she flushed in the darkness. He had asked her to go for a ride with him this evening, and she had said she had a previous engagement.

Now he had discovered that she had lied to him.

"I couldn't tell you outright that I didn't want to come," she forced herself to say.

His brows raised.

"Then you don't like me?"

She turned away from him, her shoulders drooping. Around them the wind shrieked, and the lights in the town below twinkled like tiny stars. She could not bring herself to answer.

He came close to her, putting his hands on her shoulders.

"Don't you care, Judy?" he urged softly.

Still there was no answer. He turned her around slowly, lifted up her face. Her mouth was quivering, her violet eyes shining with tears.

"Judy!" he breathed again.

"Oh! I do care! I do!" she whispered. "Only I'm so afraid!"

"Afraid? Of what?"

She drew away from him. Her hands clenched.



"You'll hate me when you hear it, but I can't help it. I can't bear to go on like this. I wish I were rich and beautiful; then I could tell you the truth. It wouldn't matter then. But I'm only a working girl, and you are a rich man. I can't go out with you any more."

Her voice broke. Shame crimsoned her face, and she swallowed hard to keep back the tears.

Clive Darrington looked at her in astonishment. He realized what this revelation meant. She loved him. What did it matter if she was not of his own class? Love was the only thing that mattered in life.

"Judy! Oh, my dear! I'm glad that you have told me that. You see, I love you, too. I wanted to see you to-night to say good-by. I am going to New York to-morrow. But I cannot go alone. I've got to have you with me."

His eager words filled her ears as his arms closed around her and held her tightly against him.

"Will you go with me? We'll be married. My darling, don't be afraid. We love one another. What does anything else matter?"

His lips found hers, silencing the protest she would have made. And beneath that kiss Judy felt that she would never have the strength to refuse. She loved this man; she belonged to him.

Her mother's warning faded from her mind.

"If you love me," she whispered tremulously, "I'm yours. I love you. I would go with you to the ends of the earth!"

Their lips met again, sealing their compact. The lights in the town seemed cold and far away. In the arms of the man she loved, Judy dreamed of the lights of New York, and it seemed to her that they were calling.

It was after ten when Judy alighted from Clive Darrington's car at the end of the street where she lived.

Neither of them saw the man who stood in the shadow of a doorway, watching them. It was Ralph Holden, who had been waiting for hours in the hope of seeing Judy when she returned home.

"You'll remember, darling," Clive Darrington said eagerly. "When you reach New York to-morrow night, get a taxi and drive straight to the Fitzlyon Hotel. I shall engage your room by phone to-night, so everything will be in order. I shall join you there later. You're sure you'll not be afraid?"

"No," she laughed tremulously. "Only afraid that it all sounds too good to be true."

He pressed her lips with his.

"It's true, all right," he whispered back. "Good night, darling."

Then Judy was standing on the pavement alone, watching the car as it disappeared around the corner.

As she turned to walk on, Ralph Holden stepped out, blocking her path.

"What were you doing with the young boss?" he demanded angrily. "You've been with him all the evening, and your mother said you'd gone to the movies with Connie Mills. You lied to her, didn't you?"

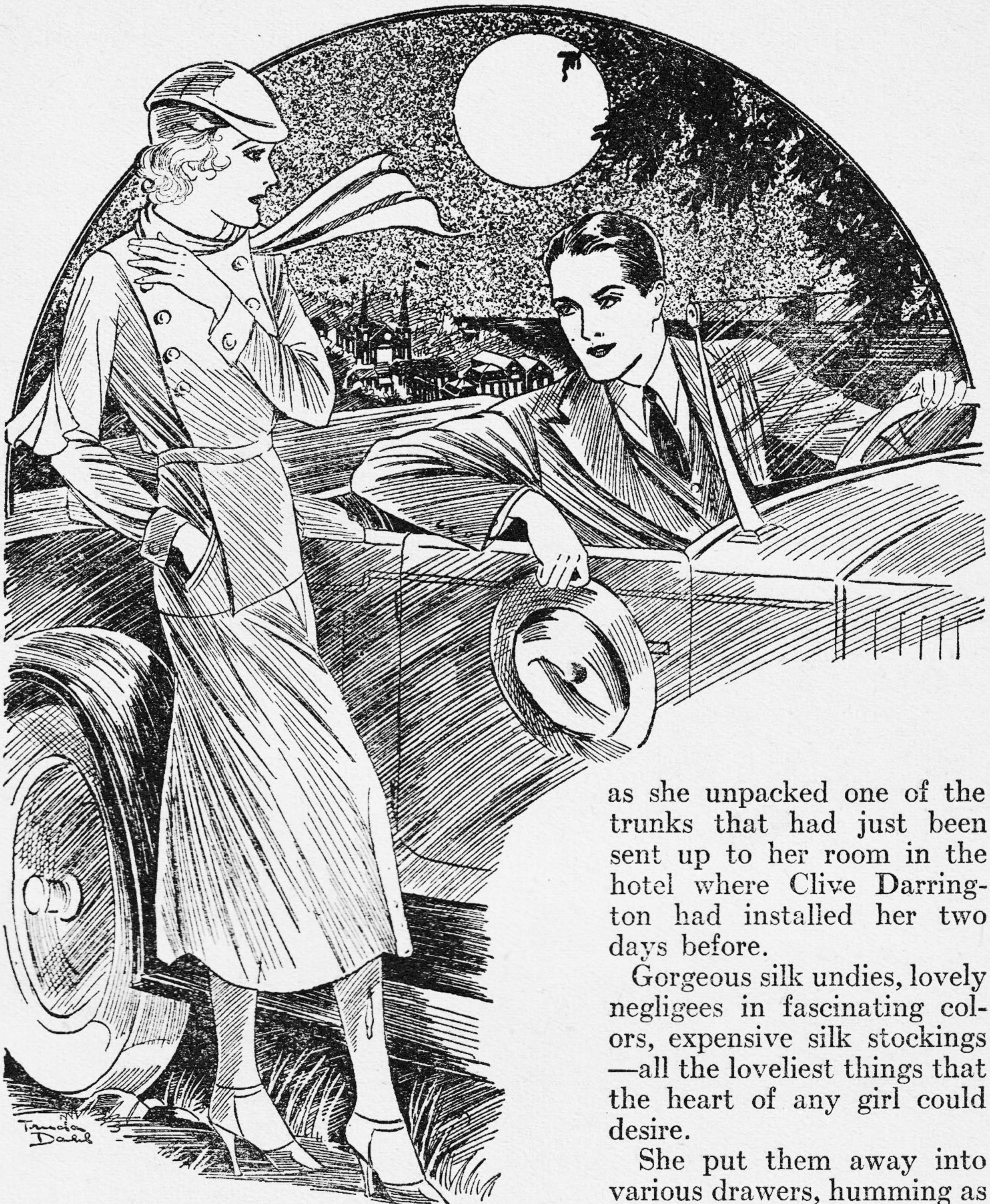
"Let me pass," she said coolly.

"You think you're lucky for him to take you out and kiss you," he went on quickly. "Well, let me tell you this, Judy: He'll never give you what I will—real love and a wedding ring."

"I don't want either of those from you," she retorted. "Take your hands off me!"

That night, mingled with her dreams of the man she loved, the man she was to meet in New York





*"Why, Judy! I never expected to find you up here! When I saw you in the glare of the headlights, I could scarcely believe my eyes. Why did you tell me you had a date to-night?"*

to-morrow, came the remembrance of those two warnings.

Laughter and happiness, beautiful things for which she had always craved! Judy felt a thrill of delight

as she unpacked one of the trunks that had just been sent up to her room in the hotel where Clive Darrington had installed her two days before.

Gorgeous silk undies, lovely negligees in fascinating colors, expensive silk stockings—all the loveliest things that the heart of any girl could desire.

She put them away into various drawers, humming as she touched their softness.

"I want my bride to be dressed like a queen," Clive had said when Judy had shyly remonstrated with him

for the amount of things he had ordered.

To-morrow would be her wedding day!

She went to the closet and took down a white satin gown which was



to be her wedding gown, over which she would wear the expensive mink coat that he had bought for her.

She felt that she could scarcely wait for the day to come, the day when she would be Clive Darrington's wife.

What would her mother say when she discovered that she had run away from home? Judy told herself that she would forgive her, once she knew that she was married. She hoped that her wedding would not have to be kept secret for long. She wanted everybody to know how happy she was.

Her eyes went around the lovely room, and mentally she compared it with her tiny bedroom at home. As Clive Darrington's wife, luxury like this would be hers always. A thrill of anticipation went through her.

From below, the strains of the orchestra stole seductively to her ears. She had dined and danced with the man she loved to-night, and now all she could do was to wait with joyous anticipation for to-morrow.

A bride on the eve of her wedding!

Her face was flushed, and her eyes shone with the light of love that transforms the face of every girl to whom it comes.

Judy raised her head as the sound of knocking came to her ears. Listening, she discovered that the knock was on the outer door of her suite.

Could it be the man she loved?

She glanced hastily at herself in the mirror, smoothing down her hair.

The knock was repeated. Passing into the other room and closing the bedroom door behind her, Judy called, "Come in."

The door opened slowly, and as it did so Judy uttered a gasp and stiffened.

The man who entered was the last in the world whom she desired to see. It was Ralph Holden!

"Oh!" she gasped. "How dare you come here?"

He laid his hat and stick on the table.

"I came the first moment I could," he replied. "Judy, why were you mad enough to come here with that man?"

"Has it anything to do with you?" she asked.

"Everything. Apart from my own feelings for you, there's your mother. I promised her I'd come after you and bring you back home. You see, I happened to overhear you when you were making your arrangements."

She looked him up and down furiously.

"I'm quite capable of looking after myself," she told him.

"But you're not. Don't you understand? A girl can't do a thing like this and keep her reputation."

Judy laughed.

"I'm afraid, in your eyes, my reputation has gone already," she said lightly.

"But you do not understand. You're young and innocent; you don't realize what it means."

"Perhaps it will interest you to know," she said coldly, "that I am to be married to Mr. Darrington in the morning. Now, will you please go?"

He took up his hat.

"He's deceiving you," he answered. "He'll never marry you. Won't you come back with me, before it's too late?"

She picked up his stick and pushed it into his hand.

"I'll come back as Clive Darrington's wife," she told him.

"And I repeat that he'll never marry you. Well, good-by, Judy."



At least, I have done my best to help you."

He left her standing there contemptuously in the middle of the room. As he stepped into the corridor, his eyes lit up. A man was coming straight toward him. It was Clive Darrington.

For a moment the two men did not speak.

"What were you doing in that room?" demanded Clive Darrington at last.

Ralph Holden's eyes narrowed. His quick brain saw a chance of getting even with the girl who had repulsed him so often.

"Is that any business of yours?" he sneered.

"It certainly is. The girl who occupies that suite happens to be——"

Ralph Holden cut him short.

"Indeed? But I am afraid I have a previous right to the affections of Judy Tarrant."

Clive Darrington's face was pale and angry. The other man saw his advantage and seized it.

"Of course, I can't blame her for coming here with you," he went on. "A girl like Judy Tarrant seizes all the good times she can get. Only, as one man to another, don't lose your head over her. She is yours now, as once she was mine in the past."

"Stop!"

Clive Darrington clenched his hands against his sides, and it was with difficulty that he refrained from striking the man who was uttering those poisonous words.

"Very well. I was only warning you," Ralph Holden said coolly and, turning, walked away.

Clive Darrington stood staring at the closed door of Judy's suite.

Could it be true?—he wondered. The thought was torture. What had that man been doing in her room?

It was late, and she was supposed to have retired for the night. Instead, Ralph Holden had been in there with her.

He strode to the door, and raised his hand to knock. Then it dropped limply to his side. No, he could not face her to-night. If this thing was true, then he could not bear it. He turned on his heel and went back along the corridor, going down the stairs and out of the hotel into the dark streets.

Judy!

The utterance of her name was like a prayer in his heart. He remembered how she had danced with him earlier in the evening, her cheeks flushed, her innocent eyes lifted to his face, her body trembling in his arms with happiness, she had said. Now he wondered bitterly whether the happiness had been because she knew she was seeing that other man to-night.

What could he believe? Judy's eyes or Ralph Holden's words?

Heedless of time or distance, he went on and on. The bright lights of the city seemed to mock him. People were returning from the theaters; cars in which sat beautiful girls and handsome men crowded the streets. And all the time those words went throbbing through his head as he thought of the girl who was to be his bride:

"She is yours now, as she was mine once in the past."

He stepped off the curb, some one screamed, something hit him, and he knew no more.

Judy awoke with a thrill of pleasant anticipation.

Her eyes went round the luxurious room, which the winter sunlight already flooded with its golden loveliness.

It was her wedding day!



At first she could scarcely believe the wonder of it.

The wedding was fixed for eleven o'clock at a small church not far away. She had several hours in which to make herself as beautiful as possible for the man she was to marry.

Clive Darrington!

Lying there among the pillows, she found herself thinking of him. He was so handsome with his clear-cut features and keen blue eyes beneath heavy brows that were dark like his wavy brown hair. She thought of the other man who wanted to marry her with a little shudder of distaste.

Ralph Holden would never inspire her love. There had been something about him the night before that had opened her eyes to his true nature. His words came back to her:

"He'll never marry you. He's deceiving you."

Strange that her mother had said something like that. But they did not know Clive Darrington. She loved him and trusted him, and today she was to be his bride. There was a knock on the door, and a maid entered with her breakfast. She drank her coffee, sitting up in bed, while in the adjoining room she heard the pleasant sound of running water.

She lingered in the bath, remembering with a twist of her mouth the zinc bath at home into which she could barely squeeze herself. Now she had said good-by to everything like that.

After her bath, she fingered the white satin, wishing that she were going to have a huge wedding; but she dismissed the thought. After all, what did it matter? It was essential that their wedding should be kept secret at first, Clive had told

her. She loved him so much that she would do anything in the world for him.

With a thrill of joy, she realized that at last it was time she dressed for her wedding.

She slipped the white gown over her head, and it fell in simple, flowing lines to her ankles.

She pulled a small velvet hat over her head, and slipped her arms into the mink coat, completely hiding her dress.

She was ready, and it was nearly time to start.

But where was her bridegroom?

Anxiously, she lifted the telephone receiver, and called his room; but he was not there.

With a puzzled frown she went down stairs, hoping to catch sight of him. But though plenty of people crowded the dining room and went in and out of the hotel lobby, there was no sign of the man whom she was to marry.

At last she went up to the room clerk's desk.

"Mr. Darrington went out and gave up the key to his room last night," he informed her. "He has not been back since."

Judy turned away and went back to her suite, her mind numbed with sudden fear, and took off the fur coat and hat.

For a long time she stood in her bedroom, her hands gripping the edge of the dressing table, her eyes fixed as if fascinated on the little marble clock that stood there.

He had given up his key last night, and he had not been back since.

And it was ten thirty—only half an hour to the time when they should be made man and wife!

"He'll come!" she kept saying to herself. "There's plenty of time. He'll come at the last minute."



Quarter to eleven!

Her heart was thudding now beneath the bodice of the white gown. She looked down at it, and hot tears fell from her cheek and splashed on the soft whiteness. She rubbed them away with superstitious fear.

Tears on a wedding gown were said to be unlucky.

"Please let him come! If he fails me, I won't be able to bear it!" A prayer went up from her heart.

The clock said one minute to eleven.

"Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband? Wilt thou love, honor, and obey him——"

Parts of the marriage service that she had read in the prayer book ran through her mind, until she felt her brain reeling. All her body seemed rigid, as if the blood in her veins had frozen. And the clock said ten minutes past eleven.

She shuddered at her reflection in the white gown. Suddenly she pulled it off, and trod on it where it lay on the carpet.

She was a thing of scorn; a bride deserted on her wedding morning!

Where was Clive Darrington? What had happened to keep him away from her?

Shuddering, she thought of the possibility of an accident. Then, just as quickly, jeering voices seemed to speak to her, mocking her in the bitter loneliness of her room.

"He'll never give you real love and a wedding ring."

She shrank back, as if already the finger of scorn pointed to her.

They had warned her, but she hadn't believed them.

He had repented of his decision to marry her, and had walked out of the hotel, leaving her to meet the situation as best she could.

What could she do?

By staying with Clive Darrington she had lost her good name. She had run away from home without any explanation, and now the man she trusted had deceived her.

Judy crossed the street from the station and jumped onto a trolley car. With burning eyes she saw the familiar buildings go past her as she gripped the small case she carried.

She was going home, but would her mother forgive her?

It seemed to her, as she walked up the familiar street where she lived, that faces appeared at the windows, mocking faces that laughed because she had come back home beaten and disillusioned. Her fingers fumbled with the key at her own door. She had scarcely opened it before a cry greeted her.

"Judy, my girl! My darling!"

The case clattered from her hands. She was down on her knees, her cold hands clasped in those of her mother.

"Oh, mother, please take me back! I've done wrong, been foolish. But I had to come home."

"Of course, dear. Where else should you go? Thank heavens, you've come back, my lamb." Mrs. Tarrant rocked Judy to and fro, hushing her as she had done when she was a child; but a great fear was at her heart.

Her daughter had been foolish, had gone away with her employer's son. She had come back; but, if the truth were known, every one would scorn her.

"Mother!" Judy's voice was quivering with sobs as she hid her burning face. "You were right. He wouldn't marry me. What shall I do?"

Her mother's tears fell on Judy's bowed head. Nobody would ever know the agony she had undergone when she had discovered that Judy



had gone away with Clive Darrington. It was Ralph Holden who had told her.

"You'll have to live it down," she said, smoothing the soft golden hair. "You made a terrible mistake, but we'll pull through together."

"Feeling better, Judy?"

Judy blushed as she replied to the girl who worked at the desk next to

hers. She was back at the factory, and everybody thought that she had been absent owing to illness.

If they knew the truth! She imagined the scorn with which they would regard her.

At one time she had taken pleasure in her work. Now she felt that she hated it, and the hours dragged until she thought the day would never end.



"Oh, mother, please take me back! I've done wrong, been foolish in going away with Clive. But I had to come home. He wouldn't marry me. What shall I do?"



Ralph Holden, she learned, had left the factory a few days before. She dared not inquire about Clive Darrington.

But every time the door opened, her heart leaped, thinking it might be him.

"Judy!" The woman in charge of the large room called her. "Just slip up to the boss's office with this, will you? They've left it in here by mistake."

She took the envelope and climbed the stairs to the big private office. Knocking at the door, she opened it and walked in.

"A letter got left in our office by mistake," she began, by way of explanation to the girl who came up to her. Then her eyes went over the head of the girl to a man who stood by the desk, frowning over a letter in his hand.

Her face went suddenly white. It was Clive Darrington!

"All right," said the girl, wondering what was the matter with Judy. "You can give it to me."

"Oh, I—I——" stammered Judy, and stood there uncertainly. What should she do? She thought quickly. There was only one way out of the office. If she waited in the corridor, Clive Darrington would be forced to pass her when he came out.

She slipped out, shutting the door behind her. For a few minutes she leaned against the wall, her hands to her racing heart.

It seemed hours to Judy before the door of the office opened and she saw the tall figure emerge. Had she seen his eyes at that moment, she would have noticed that he was like a man walking in his sleep. As he came nearer, she stepped into his path.

"Clive!" she whispered fearfully.

He put his hand to his head, and looked down at her, his face utterly

blank, as if he were looking at a stranger.

"Why did you leave me alone in New York?" she went on desperately.

His face grew stern. With a contemptuous movement he brushed her out of his path.

"I don't know what you are talking about," he said coldly. "Your place is downstairs. You had better return there."

With every trace of color drained from her face, Judy stood speechless, staring after him.

He had treated her like a stranger.

Judy went back to her work, feeling that her suffering was almost more than she could bear.

But she did not know that upstairs, in his private office, the man she had just left sat with his head in his hands, struggling to overcome that awful blankness of his brain that he had experienced since his accident that night in New York.

He had recovered to find himself in a hospital. In spite of his fall, there was scarcely any outward injury. But the concussion had affected his memory, and though he had been brought back by his father, with whom the hospital authorities had communicated, his mind regarding everything that had happened before the accident was blank. It was as if a veil had been drawn over his past life obscuring all that had gone before.

That meeting with Judy in the corridor had stirred the chords of his memory faintly, but to try to think was torture.

He got up and prepared to go home. But somehow he carried the image of Judy's face with him as he had seen it that afternoon.

What had she meant? In what way was she connected with his past



that was so mysteriously hidden away from him?

Ralph Holden stepped back into the dark doorway as he saw the employees coming out of the big factory.

On discovering that Judy had returned from New York, he had made inquiries there, and learned about Clive Darrington's accident.

He knew that the other man's memory of the past was blotted out, and guessed that he would have forgotten what part Judy had played in his life.

Even yet, Ralph told himself, it was not too late to win the girl he desired for himself.

Suddenly he saw her coming along the street, a tired-looking creature in her worn winter coat and red *bêret*. He had a swift vision of her as he had seen her at the hotel, strikingly beautiful in a rose-pink taffeta gown that revealed her soft, gleaming shoulders. He knew that she only needed lovely clothes to make her perfect. Clothes such as he could buy her since he had come into possession of his uncle's money.

He stepped into her path.

"So you're back home again, Judy?" he greeted her softly.

Judy started and looked at him with hunted eyes in the dusk.

"I—I thought you were staying in New York," she stammered in reply.

Seeing Ralph Holden brought that night at the hotel vividly back to her mind, made the thing that had seemed like a dream grow more real to her.

"No," he smiled. "After you had gone, there was no attraction for me there."

She felt panic-stricken, for this man knew her shameful secret.

"I'll have to be going," she said, moving away from him.

He laid a detaining hand on her arm.

"There's no hurry," he told her. "I'll walk home with you. There's something I want to say to you."

Judy could scarcely walk as he fell into step beside her. The torture she had suffered this afternoon had made her head ache, and her eyes were like dark pools in her pale face. Fear of what this man would have to say to her set her heart thudding unevenly.

"I don't know why you follow me about," she said angrily. "Surely I have made it plain to you that I object to your conduct?"

"As many people will object to yours when they know the truth," he answered softly.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

They were in a quiet street now, and he stopped and faced her.

"I mean this, Judy: I have always wanted you. Now I know a way to get you. I offer you marriage. Promise to say 'yes,' or I'll tell everybody about your trip to New York."

She shrank back, the pupils of her eyes dilating with fear.

"You wouldn't!" she breathed.

Ralph Holden's words struck terror to her heart.

She felt as if she were in a trap. This man offered her the choice of marriage or shame.

She remembered her mother's elaborate explanations of her absence those few days, in order that the neighbors should not guess the truth.

Her good name was gone. This man who alone knew her secret offered to keep silent at a price.

What should she do?

A bride! Pale as her wedding veil, beneath which shone a gleam of pale golden hair, Judy's eyes were



fixed, as if in bewilderment and fear, on the flowers and gold cross that gleamed upon the altar.

All the employees of the factory had been allowed time off to see Judy married to Ralph Holden. Tears were in the eyes of some of her fellow workers, who were touched by her pale beauty. Never had they seen so lovely a bride.

To Judy, the ceremony that followed her passage down the aisle was a nightmare.

Her wedding day had come, but she was marrying the wrong man. The man she loved had deceived her, and because the shame he had brought upon her name must be kept a secret from the world, she was compelled to become the wife of the man beside her.

"Wilt thou have this man—wilt thou love, honor——"

She raised bewildered eyes to the face of the minister, and her lips moved soundlessly. She wanted to say: "No! Can't you see I do not love him?" Instead, she murmured:

"I will!"

The wedding ring slipped on her finger. After that, she was taken into the vestry, where she signed her own name for the last time.

She was Ralph Holden's wife!

Crowds of girls waited to see her come out. They smothered her with confetti; their gay cries followed her as she got into the waiting car. They were envying her, when all the time she was being married in order to keep the man at her side from broadcasting the loss of her good name to the world.

Even her mother did not know the truth. She had been at the church in a new brown silk dress, proud of her girl who made such a beautiful bride. But, though she tried to smile, Judy's heart was breaking. She was thinking of

Clive Darrington, the man who had taught her the meaning of love, raised her hopes to the highest pinnacle, and then ground her heartlessly under his heel.

As she sat in the car, her bouquet crushed close in her arms, the man she had married leaned toward her, his lips seeking hers.

Her eyes were dumb and piteous, like those of a stricken animal.

What could she do, tied to a man she hated? How could she face the life that lay before her as his wife?

## CHAPTER II.

Judy stared around the luxurious bedroom of the hotel where Ralph Holden had brought her for their honeymoon.

All the way to the shore, she had felt in a dream. This thing she was experiencing could not be true. It was all a terrible dream from which she would presently awake.

But it was true.

Her eyes went to the dressing table, where his brushes lay side by side with hers. A collar box had been carelessly thrown on the bureau and left there—reminders of the man she had married and to whom she belonged.

"Oh!" she breathed into the silence of the room. "I am afraid!"

She buried her face in her hands, and sobs shook her. She thought of Clive Darrington, the man who should have been her husband. It had been a dream too wonderful to last.

But he was a cad, worthless, and he had betrayed her love, played with her. She thought of his face as she had seen it in the corridor at the factory that afternoon—grim and stern, like the face of a stranger.

"I hate him!" she said fiercely. "If only there was a way to make



him pay, and to suffer as I have done!"

She remembered that scene with her mother before she had set off on her honeymoon. While the guests toasted her and enjoyed themselves downstairs, Judy was crying in her mother's arms. The whole story had come out.

"Mother, I don't love Ralph. I had to marry him because he threatened to tell everybody about that time in New York. It's Clive Darrington I love, in spite of all. Mother, he has broken my heart."

She raised her eyes, big and haunting, and looked around the room.

"I can't face it!" she sobbed brokenly. "I would rather die than stay here with him."

Suddenly a thought flashed through her mind. Suppose she ran away?

The thought held her breathless. She had married Ralph Holden in order that he should keep the secret of her past. But she was not bound to live with him. She bore his name, and that alone would prevent him from telling the world what she had done. If he did, he would be only harming himself.

She got up, her face flushed with excitement.

The man she had married had gone out for a walk, and Judy knew he would not be back just yet. With trembling fingers she changed her dress and put on her hat and coat. When he returned, he would find that the girl he had trapped into being his bride had run away.

Judy put the cover on her typewriter and, with a group of other girls, went into the cloakroom for her hat and coat.

Several months had passed since the night when she had run away from the man she had married. At

first she had been in despair, wondering what she could do to earn her living. She had written a heart-broken letter to her mother, but had refused to go home again, where her friends would know that her marriage had ended so wretchedly.

Eventually, she had managed to get a job in a New York warehouse. One of the girls had been very kind to her.

"You don't look cut out for this sort of work," she had said. "Why don't you go to night school and learn shorthand? I'll take you with me to-night, if you like."

So Judy had enrolled, and had picked up shorthand very quickly.

She loved the work, and had dreams that some day she might get a position as secretary.

"Good night, Judy!" Two by two, or in laughing groups, the girls ran down the stairs into the street. Judy felt an acute sense of loneliness as she followed more slowly.

She paused on the pavement, watching the traffic roll by in the dusk. In the taxis and luxurious cars she caught glimpses of beautiful girls, the handsome profiles of men. They were wealthy and happy, not beaten and heartbroken as she was.

"It isn't fair!" she said to herself, as the tears stung her eyes. "Why couldn't he have left me alone? If only I had never met him!"

The flow of her thoughts was interrupted suddenly by a voice at her side, and a hand gripping her arm.

"Well, of all the things! Imagine meeting you here, Judy Tarrant!" exclaimed a girl's voice.

Judy turned around, startled. It was Connie Mills, a girl who had worked with her in the factory at home, and whom she had always considered her best friend.

"Connie!"



Judy's greeting was sincere, but she flushed as she remembered her position. What could she tell her friend about her marriage?

The other slipped a hand under her arm.

"I know how you feel," she said bluntly. "Your mother told me, when she knew I was coming to New York to accept a new job. She

gave me your address, and I was coming to see you. I'm staying in Travers Street. Suppose you come along, and we'll talk things over?"

A short time later, the two friends were sitting in Connie's room, drinking coffee.

After a time, the other began to tell Judy the news about the factory.



*There were faces in front of his eyes, that suddenly evolved into one face that bent anxiously over him. Clive Darrington stared at that face, those eyes, the trembling red mouth that once, he seemed to remember, he had kissed.*



"You remember Clive Darrington, the young boss? He's been seriously ill. He's left the factory and is at their country home in Manchester. I hear they want a secretary for him." She did not notice how Judy flushed and her hands clutched the tiny handkerchief she held. "You've learned stenography, haven't you? Why don't you apply?"

It was said in a joking manner, but the very suggestion set Judy's heart leaping.

She laughed it off, but when she was back in her own room, the thought came to her.

Clive Darrington's secretary!

It would mean she would be with him alone, for many hours every day.

Of what was she thinking? If she applied for the position, her motive would be revenge. Somehow, if she became his secretary, she would find a way to pay him back for what he had done to her. And she would make him pay, whatever the cost to herself.

"I'll go!" she determined.

And that night she dreamed of the man she told herself she hated; dreamed that she was in his arms and that his lips were crushing hers with a kiss of burning passion.

Clive Darrington lounged against the mantelpiece, his frowning gaze on the bent, pale-gold head of the girl who was taking down the letter he was dictating.

He had insisted on choosing his secretary himself, and something about Judy's wistful look had appealed to him. In some way she stirred vague memories of that hidden past that he tried in vain to bring back to his mind. Another illness had wiped out even more recent happenings, and he could not

recollect that Judy had been employed in the factory, even though she had given him her own name.

He paused in his dictation and put his hand to his head, a habit with which she was now familiar.

"It's strange," he said, half to himself. "I can't remember, but you remind me of some one I used to know. Haven't I seen you somewhere before?"

Judy raised her troubled eyes to his face; but, before she could reply, he made a gesture with his hands and went on dictating.

Judy was glad to escape from the room. With her hand to her fast-beating heart, she ran upstairs and into her bedroom.

Had she done right to come here, where the very presence of the man who had once pretended to love her filled her with torment?

The sight of him, and the knowledge that his brain was clouded, leaving him continually groping in the darkness, caused all her pity and love to well up. She had no idea that the loss of his memory dated from that night before her expected marriage to him. It had never occurred to her that that was the real reason he had treated her as a stranger when she had approached him that day at the factory.

But, even though she believed him to have been a cad, unworthy even of her respect, yet in his illness she realized the blinding truth. Whatever he had done, her love for him was not dead. So long as he never recognized her as the girl he had betrayed, as his memory of the past never returned, she would stay with him, serving him, loving him.

"Oh! Clive! My darling!" The hushed words broke from her, although she tried to fight them back.

With blurred eyes she stared through the window at the beau-



tiful grounds below. She was employed in the house where one day she had dreamed of being mistress. But, so long as she could serve the man she loved, it did not matter.

Later in the afternoon, Clive Darrington requested that she should accompany him on a business call.

Seated in the car beside him, she thought of those secret drives in his car when she had been working at the factory. He sat at the wheel, looking perfectly capable and strong and well-groomed, just as he had done then. Nobody would know that over his brain there was a dark curtain that he tried in vain to lift.

Clive Darrington kept glancing at Judy with troubled eyes. He was trying so hard to remember, to find out what part this golden-haired girl had once played in his life. But trying to bring back the past made his head ache. To-day, somehow, he didn't feel too sure of himself, and he began to wish he had not driven the car himself.

He tried to keep his fear away from Judy, for he was very sensitive about his illness.

She made a remark, and he replied, but his eyes were strained on the car that was coming toward him. His hand trembled, and suddenly there was a dark blur before his eyes, while his head thumped intolerably.

He heard a piercing scream from the girl beside him. Then there was a terrific crash, and he felt himself hurtling through the air. After that, thoughts and forms spun around in his head; then came a strange feeling of relief. There were faces in front of his eyes, that suddenly evolved into one face that bent anxiously over him.

Clive Darrington stared at that face, those eyes, the trembling red

mouth that once, he seemed to remember, he had kissed.

Judy!

He struggled up, a great excitement welling within him.

"Are you all right?" she was saying anxiously.

All right? He could have laughed aloud with joy. His memory had returned! The blow on his head had done what even specialists had failed to do.

The past unrolled itself like a scroll before his eyes as he struggled to his feet and stood facing her. Judy was pale, and her whole body trembled.

"You?" he said anxiously. "I saw it coming. I thought we should both be killed."

"Oh, I only got a few scratches," she said cheerfully. "I got thrown into a hedge that happened to be nice and soft." She wiped the blood away from a scratch on her face. "Here come the men from the garage. The driver of the other car got off lightly, and he telephoned for assistance."

Clive Darrington fought back the eager words that were trembling on his lips, but other people appeared, and soon he found himself being driven home in another car.

What was Judy doing here?—he asked himself as things became clearer. Did it mean that she had loved him and stood by him through everything?

"I'm glad you feel none the worse for your accident, Mr. Darrington."

Judy sat down in her usual place, her notebook on her knee.

Clive Darrington felt a sense of excitement as he stared at the smooth gold head that rivaled the pale sunshine filtering into the room.



How would she take the wonderful news that he had to tell her, the truth that, as yet, only himself and the doctor knew?

"On the contrary," he smiled. "I feel very much better."

She sat with her pencil poised over her notebook, waiting for him to begin dictation. When he did not speak, she raised her eyes to his questioningly.

And, as she looked into them, she realized with a shock that his eyes were those of a man who knew!

The pencil slipped from her fingers and dropped onto the carpet. Clive Darrington crossed the space between them and put his hands on her shoulders.

"Judy!" he breathed.

"Oh!" She struggled to her feet. "You know? You remember?"

"Yes!" His words came breathlessly; his eyes were eager. "It was the blow that brought back my memory. Oh, my darling, it's all so wonderful!"

His arms went around her, and Judy felt herself crushed against him, his lips on hers, just as she had dreamed through many a lonely night.

In the wonderful ecstasy that filled her, she found herself returning his kisses.

"Judy, I love you. Whatever may have happened, I love you still and shall always do so. I remember everything now, and I want to give you all my life to make up for what you must have suffered."

Judy stiffened in his arms. She had suddenly come to her senses.

This man who held her, who breathed passionate words of love in her ears, whose mouth was crushed on hers, had done a similar thing before.

He had caused her to lose her good name, and had gone back to

the factory without a thought of her. He had known what he was doing then, she told herself bitterly. He had played with her, as no doubt he thought he could play again. He thought she was that type of girl, whom a man could treat as a toy, to be taken up or put down again at his will.

She drew herself out of his arms. The moment of her revenge, for which she had longed, had come.

"Love?" she cried scornfully. "I came here, knowing you had lost your memory, to find a means of revenge for what you had done to me. Once, when I loved you, you cast me aside. Now you love me." She gave a mocking laugh. "This is my answer: I hate you! And your kisses have been given to another man's wife. I am married to Ralph Holden."

The scornful tones of her voice rang into the room, stunning the man who heard her; but, before he could utter a word, she was gone.

He sank down into a chair, one sentence only ringing in his ears:

"Your kisses have been given to another man's wife! I am married to Ralph Holden."

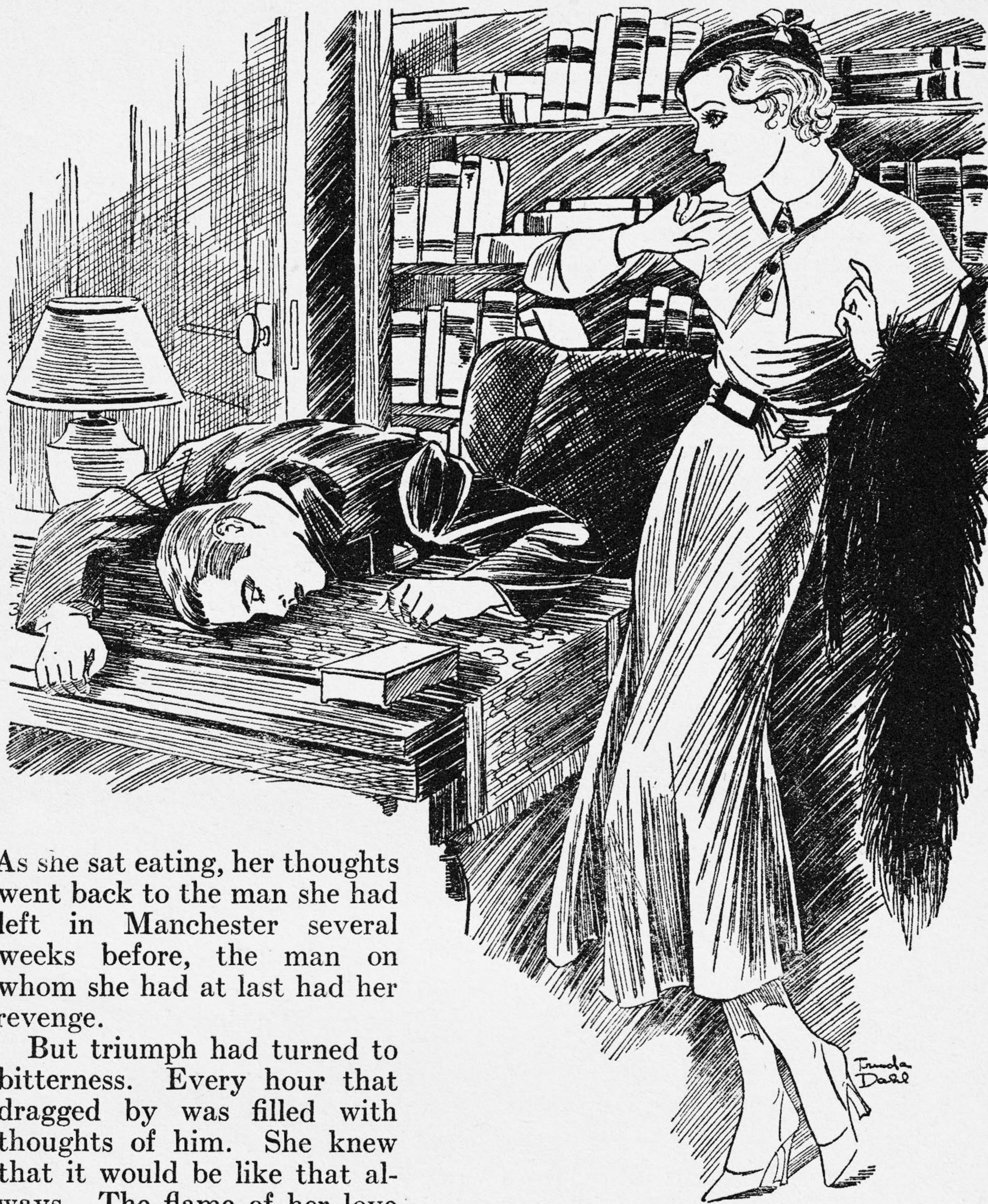
He groaned aloud. Why had he remembered? Why had he not stayed in the darkness that was far kinder than knowledge of the truth?

Judy climbed the stairs to her room, wondering how much longer she would be able to endure the life she was leading.

A life she hated, back at the warehouse, with the loneliness of this room to return to every night, and all the time bitter memory in her heart.

She lit the gas in the small kitchenette and, flinging off her hat and coat, began preparing her supper.





As she sat eating, her thoughts went back to the man she had left in Manchester several weeks before, the man on whom she had at last had her revenge.

But triumph had turned to bitterness. Every hour that dragged by was filled with thoughts of him. She knew that it would be like that always. The flame of her love for him would burn in her memory forever.

Suddenly her eyes rested on an envelope that had been pushed under the door. She bent down and picked it up with trembling fingers. The thought that it might be from Clive Darrington disappeared and turned to fear.

Tearing open the envelope, she saw it was from Ralph Holden.

*A gasp escaped her. She stared with fascinated horror at the limp form. Shrinkingly she touched him, but he gave no sign. Then, suddenly, the truth dawned upon her. Ralph Holden was dead!*

She read it, and the color drained from her face.

UNLESS YOU RETURN TO ME BY THE 16TH  
I INTEND TO TAKE DIVORCE PROCEEDINGS  
AGAINST YOU NAMING CLIVE DARRINGTON



AS CORRESPONDENT STOP YOU HAVE BEEN LIVING IN HIS HOUSE, AND ALSO THE STORY OF YOUR TRIP TO NEW YORK BEFORE YOUR MARRIAGE TO ME WOULD MAKE INTERESTING READING IN THE NEWSPAPERS STOP IF YOU ARE WISE YOU WILL SEND ME A WIRE SAYING THAT YOU ARE RETURNING TO ME AT ONCE

Judy let the letter fall from her fingers, a sense of hopelessness possessing her.

What could she do?

For hours she sat there, her head in her hands, thinking out her problem. For her mother's sake, because she wanted to save a scandal, she had married Ralph Holden. For her mother's sake she would have to return to him.

In an easy-chair that was drawn up to the fire, Ralph Holden stared down at the telegram he held in his hand.

A smile of triumph crossed his face as he read it, and his eyes narrowed.

#### I ACCEPT YOUR TERMS

That was all it said. Not even a signature, but he knew it was from the girl he had sworn to master. The girl who had thought she could cheat him.

He tore it up and tossed it into the fire. Rising, he laughed harshly as he stood swaying, his hand on the back of the chair.

The girl who had run away from him on their wedding night was coming back. She would be here any minute now. Here in his arms, his wife.

She would not know the kind of comfort he had found since she had gone away. That friend of his at the club had showed him a way to happiness.

Unsteadily, he crossed the room till he reached a small box that

stood on a polished table. With trembling fingers he lifted the lid. A little more of that powder, and he would be able to dream happily until she came.

Cocaine!

Gazing around stealthily, lest any one should be watching, he sniffed some of the powder; then, with a satisfied sigh, he closed the box. He felt better now and sank into a chair, giving in to the luxurious drowsiness that was creeping over him.

Judy!

She thought she had cheated him, but he had been having her followed all the time. He knew every movement of hers since she had left the hotel that night. And now she should pay for all those kisses he had missed. She should learn obedience to him, her husband.

He tried to stir in his chair, and felt that his limbs were heavy. A sort of panic seized him. He had never felt quite like this before. Through his half-consciousness there came the memory of some words the doctor had said a short time ago.

"If you don't leave cocaine alone, Holden, I won't answer for the consequences. It's slow death, man."

Slow death!

The perspiration broke out on his forehead. He remembered that he had not been quite so careful as usual about the dose. He struggled in his chair and tried to shout. But the foe he tried to fight was far stronger than himself.

The afternoon wore on. The shadows grew in the room, where, after a time, the firelight sprang up, casting a red glow over the walls and ceiling. And, grotesque in the silence, a shadow danced on the wall—the shadow of a man with his head resting on his outflung arms.



When Judy came, she trembled as she rang the bell of Ralph Holden's house.

As she waited for an answer to her ring, she felt that she wanted to scream, and her heart was filled with despair.

Once she got inside this place, she would never be able to escape again.

The door was opened by a servant, who indicated the room in which the man she had married waited for her.

She went forward unsteadily, and pushed open the door.

The shadows baffled her. The fire had almost died down, and there was an eerie stillness in the room that frightened her. Where was Ralph Holden? Why did he not speak?

Switching on the light, she looked around the room. Then she saw the man who had fallen face forward onto the table.

A gasp escaped her. She crossed the room slowly, staring with fascinated horror at the limp form, the outstretched arms. Shrinkingly she touched him, but he gave no sign. Then, suddenly, the truth dawned upon her.

Ralph Holden was dead!

A strange feeling came over her, caused by the shock. She staggered to the door and called to the servants. When they came, she pointed a shaking finger to the still figure, and then slipped unconscious to the floor.

The inquest was over. Judy, who had just been reading the report of it, tossed the newspaper aside and sat staring through the window.

She was still in Ralph Holden's house. Her eyes went down the slender lines of the black dress she was wearing. Mockery again! She was wearing black now, as not long

ago she had worn white bridal clothes, in order to deceive the world, who must never know that her marriage had been one in name only, that she had sold herself to Ralph Holden in order that he would keep silent about that episode in her past.

She sighed as she turned the wedding ring on her finger. With Ralph Holden had died the secret of that visit to New York with Clive Darrington. But she knew it was a thing that she would remember all her life.

Would she ever see Clive again?

The thought of him came back to her now, more vividly than before. During the short time she had worked for him when he had been unable to remember who she was, she had been wildly happy in his presence. Every look, every tone of his voice would remain forever in her memory.

But she had cut herself off from him forever. She remembered his stricken look when she had flung those words of scorn and revenge in his face.

She had had her revenge, but it was at the cost of her love and a broken heart!

"Have you heard the news? Judy's coming back home to live with her mother!"

Clive Darrington paused in the entrance to the factory as he overheard the words of two of the employees as they passed him.

Long after the girls had gone in, he stood with his hands thrust into his pockets, a frown on his brow.

Judy was coming home! What did those words mean to him?

Ever since the news of Ralph Holden's death he had felt unsettled. The girl he loved was free, but she did not love him. She had flung



words of scorn and hatred at him. Although she must know that the reason he had deserted her was because of his loss of memory, yet she had married another man.

He turned on his heel and went out of the factory yard. He walked on for a long time, till at last he found that he had turned into the street where Judy's mother lived.

Memories of the nights when he had brought the girl he loved back to the corner after a drive in his car recurred to him. He remembered her warm, soft lips, laid against his in the darkness, her whispered, "Good night."

Impulsively he walked up to the door and knocked. Mrs. Tarrant expressed her surprise at the sight of her visitor.

Clive Darrington went straight to the point.

"I hear that Judy is coming home, Mrs. Tarrant. I'm afraid you'll be thinking I treated her badly," he said. "But I want to tell you this: I loved your daughter and intended to marry her, until an accident on the night before the wedding deprived me of my memory."

"Then you didn't desert her? It wasn't that you thought her not good enough?" Mrs. Tarrant's face was flushed. "If you knew what she has suffered!"

"She soon consoled herself," he remarked bitterly.

"What do you mean?" Mrs. Tarrant asked.

"She married Ralph Holden, whom I had reason to believe she preferred to me before——"

"It's a lie!" Judy's mother interrupted. "She always hated that man. She worshiped you with every breath in her body, though I warned her to keep away from you. She married that man to save her name and prevent him from telling the

world that she had been with you, and that you wouldn't marry her! She ran away from him on her wedding night. See—I'll show you her letter to me."

There was a mist before Clive Darrington's eyes when he had finished reading Judy's pathetic letter.

"I understand everything now," he said to her at last. "But I'm going to make it all right. We'll make Judy forget the past between us."

As he went back to the factory, several phrases rang in his mind, out of Judy's letter to her mother.

"He didn't want me. He wouldn't marry me, as you warned me. But I shall worship him always, mother. Love cannot die."

As he turned into the yard, the words he had heard earlier in the afternoon rang joyfully in his ears.

"Judy's coming home!"

But he did not know that, at the last moment, Judy had changed her mind. Realizing that to go back home would be to risk coming face to face with Clive Darrington, she wired to her mother, saying she would not arrive as arranged and that a letter was following.

In the letter she explained that she was accepting the chance of traveling abroad as companion to a lady with whom she had already made arrangements.

"You will be ready to sail two weeks from to-day?" queried Judy's future employer. "You must let me know to-morrow at the latest, as I already have another applicant."

"I will let you know for certain. But I know what my decision will be. I am very anxious to go."

As Judy walked away from the beautiful house and wandered aimlessly downtown, her heart was heavy.

She was thinking of her home and



mother and the man she loved. It seemed dreadful, leaving her mother like this; but she dared not go home, because the memories that would be aroused would be too hard to bear.

It was dusk, and the stars were coming out like little lamps in the sky. Judy paused, pushing back a stray wisp of hair that blew across her face.

Something about the night reminded her of that time when she had stood staring at the town she hated, longing with all her soul for the romance that she had scarcely dared to dream.

Well, she had had her romance, and she had paid.

After the death of the man she had married, she had refused to accept any of his money. The house had been sold, and she had handed everything over to charity. She was living in a hall room.

Her footsteps dragged as she came to the street where she lived. Poverty and drabness, and once she had dreamed of riches as the wife of the man she loved. But he had only played with her, as rich men always played with poor girls.

She went slowly up the stairs, and she paused on the landing, a puzzled expression coming into her eyes at the sight of a beam of light coming from under her door.

With a frown she pushed it open quickly.

A man rose from a chair in the corner. At the sight of him the color flooded her face, and her hand, that still held the knob of the door, trembled.

It was Clive Darrington!

"You!" she gasped. "You!"

"Judy!" he said, and held out his arms.

But she made no movement toward him.

"How dare you come here?" she demanded. "Is it because my husband is dead, because you think I am alone and helpless, that you attempt to make love to me again? I don't want your love, I tell you. It isn't honest."

He was standing close to her now, towering above her. His eyes were very gentle as he looked down into hers. He took both her hands in his and drew her to him.

"No," he said, looking down into her eyes. "It's because I know the truth, Judy. Because I know that you love me, that you married another man only to save your good name, a man to whom you could never be a wife, because of your love for me. Judy, my darling, it has all been a terrible mistake. You didn't know that I was knocked down and lost my memory on the night before our wedding. I went out because I was worried, made reckless by Ralph Holden's lying words. I met him as he was leaving your room."

"I didn't know," she breathed.

Then, because she was so sorry and ashamed, she burst into tears, hiding her head against his coat.

"Don't cry, darling. It has turned out all right. There's only one star in our lives now, the star of love, and we're going to travel all our lives by its light. Kiss me, Judy. Tell me that I am forgiven for all I have made you suffer."

"It is I who needs forgiveness," she whispered, but her lips were silenced, crushed beneath those of the man who would never let her leave him again, and who would love her until the end of time.







# Temporary Wife ~

By Florence White

*A Serial*

Part IV.

## CHAPTER VII.

**S**HEILA paused before the long mirror in her bedroom, touching the spray of red roses which made such a vivid spot of color against her white gown.

For the first time in her life she recognized her own beauty with a thrill of pleasure, and was glad of it—glad because it was a gift she could bestow on the man she loved, the man who in a few hours would

**THE STORY SO FAR:** Sheila Morris goes to Miles Beresford's apartment late one night expecting to find her sister, Phyllis, there. Phyllis is not there, and Miles, angry at the accusations made by Sheila, makes her spend the night in his apartment. The next morning when they are eating breakfast, Della Sinclair, who is in love with Miles but married to another man, arrives and Miles introduces Sheila as his wife. After Della leaves, Miles persuades Sheila to pose as his wife. Later, fearing that Della suspects the truth, he tells Sheila that they must really be married. They are just leaving the church when Della sees them. Realizing that Miles really loves Sheila, Della vows that she will do all within her power to part them. Before leaving for a business trip to New York, Miles tells Sheila he loves her and she realizes that she has loved him all along.

be back here at her side, holding her close in his arms.

She had never known that any week could be so long as the last one



had been, when every hour of every day had seemed to drag on leaden feet.

Miles Beresford had gone to New York expecting to be away for two or three days, and it was a full week now since he had left; but every day a letter or a telephone call had come from him, and to-day he was returning.

As she made her way out of the room and downstairs to the library, her heart was beating swiftly at the thought of his return.

Life had begun for her a week ago to-night.

Sometimes she was almost afraid of the intensity of her love for the man she married, the man whom she had once believed she hated.

She had never known that love could be like this—a burning, flaming obsession, a longing to feel the arms of the beloved about her, a yearning for the pressure of his lips and whisper of words that were sweeter than music.

This week she seemed to have just existed, and she knew that, away from Miles, life would mean nothing.

People had called, and she had returned their calls, fulfilling her duties as the mistress of Oakleigh Lodge, but it had all been simply mechanical.

She felt thankful that she had seen nothing more of the Sinclairs. She had heard through the maid, whose sister was employed at the Sinclairs' house, that Della was in New York and her husband had returned to Chicago; but the information meant nothing to Sheila, save giving her vague relief.

She no longer felt any jealousy for Della. What need was there when she felt so certain that the man she loved was all hers?

She did not expect him back before ten or eleven o'clock, and there

was half an hour to spare before dinner; but she had dressed early, choosing a white gown deliberately, because this was to be the real beginning of their honeymoon, and she was still his bride.

She had chosen the roses because they were flowers of love, whose perfume was the incense on passion's altar.

The evenings were long now, and outside the library, the French windows of which opened onto the terrace, the gardens were bathed in sunshine.

All the throbbing loveliness of summer was in the air, and she crossed the room with the intention of going outside for a little while.

As she reached the windows and flung them wide, a shadow came between herself and the sunshine, and she stepped back with a sharp little cry as she found herself facing Della Sinclair.

"I am afraid I startled you." Della paused, framed in the open window as she spoke.

She was wearing a long coat, and her smart little hat accentuated the insolent beauty of her vividly tinted face.

"I wanted to speak to you alone," she went on.

"To me? Come in."

Much as she hated the arrival of this unwelcome visitor, Sheila forced herself to remember the laws of hospitality and stepped back with a gesture of invitation.

Della entered the room, and together they turned toward the fireplace. Sheila drew forward a chair, and, as the other seated herself, took up her own stand by the mantelpiece.

"You wanted to see me?" she asked.

"Yes." Della's face was suddenly hard, and a vindictive light gleamed



in her eyes. "I have come to ask you to give Miles his freedom."

There was an instant's dead silence, and Sheila's hands clenched. Then she flung back her head with a low laugh.

"Really," she observed, "you interest me, Mrs. Sinclair. Why are you anxious that my husband should have his freedom?"

Della flushed under the mockery of that question. Then she laughed, too, but there was nothing pleasant in the sound.

"Because, although he believes himself bound in honor to continue to give you the protection of his name, I am not prepared to stand by and see him sacrifice his life and mine," she retorted. "I am going straight from here to my husband—to tell him that I have provided him with sufficient evidence to divorce me, that I left Miles Beresford in New York last night."

She was on her feet now, and the two girls faced each other. There was a smile on Della's painted lips, and Sheila was as white as death.

But, though she felt as though a knife had been thrust into her heart, Sheila told herself not to lose grip of the one thing that mattered—her love for Miles and her absolute belief that he was incapable of anything so terribly vile as the other suggested.

"You lie!" she said clearly. "Nothing you say would ever make me believe otherwise!"

"Perhaps nothing I could say would do so," Della retorted, opening her bag as she spoke and drawing out a folded piece of paper. "But, if you read this letter, you may believe the evidence of your own eyes."

As Sheila's eyes fell on the letter which her rival held out, her breath caught, and she felt as though the

blood rushed from her heart, leaving her deathly cold.

She saw beyond all doubt that the letter was in her husband's handwriting.

Sheila sat very still, staring down at the sheet of note paper which was clasped in her hand.

A whole lifetime seemed to have passed since Della Sinclair had left her, and yet it was only a few moments since she had read those words which had sent her whole life crashing in ruins about her.

Mechanically she began to read again, although every word seemed emblazoned on her mind in letters of fire:

MY DEAREST HEART: I never meant to write to you again. I thought that I was strong enough to cut you out of my life. But even while I scorn myself for my folly, I feel that I would be less than a man if I let you go so easily.

Della, things cannot go on like this. I implore you to think well before you continue on the course that you have chosen. You belong to me—I need you—without you life means nothing.

To think of you as Gordon Sinclair's wife is still incredible, impossible. Forget it all. Come back to me.

I am in New York at the usual place, and I shall wait there for you. You must come to me. Night and day the thought of you tortures me.

MILES.

The letter was dated the fifteenth of July, the day after he had gone away.

Even now Sheila told herself that she couldn't believe it. It couldn't be true. That he should have gone straight from her arms, with her kisses on his lips, his fervent vows of love still so fresh, to summon another girl to his side!

Nothing in the world could have made her believe it save this absolute proof. She moaned softly.

A bitter little cry broke from her. She had given him her love, her



heart, all that she was capable of giving. And he had fooled her.  
But why?

The question went around and around in her mind like a squirrel in a cage.

And then a very rage of humiliation overwhelmed her, and she sprang to her feet, crushing the note she still held in her hand.

When she remembered the letters Miles had sent her since he went away, his voice over the telephone telling her that he was counting the hours until he



As Sheila's eyes fell on the letter, her breath caught, and she felt as though the blood rushed from her heart, leaving her deathly cold. It couldn't be true. That Miles should have gone straight from her arms, to summon another girl to his side!



saw her again, and was forced to believe that all the time he had been with another girl, Sheila felt that she hated him, never wanted to see him again.

Her first impulse was to face him with her knowledge of his betrayal, but what was the use? Nothing could wipe out what he had done.

Suddenly her decision was made. He should return only to find her gone. She would not remain another hour under his roof.

When Miles Beresford left home he cursed the luck which was taking him away from Sheila at this moment of perfect happiness. It was difficult to believe even then that she loved him, that she was his at last.

He knew now that his love for her was his very life, and that with her beside him there was nothing which he was not capable of accomplishing.

No man had ever loved a girl more truly or passionately than he loved her, and he would have given much to undo his past so that there should never have been any other girl in his life before he met her.

Fool that he had been to believe that the feeling which Della had roused in him was love!

With every thought and every heartbeat belonging to the girl that he had married, he arrived in New York; but, to his dismay, he quickly discovered that the business which had brought him there would last considerably longer than the two days for which he had planned to be away.

With every day that passed, his impatience increased, but at last his client's affairs were settled and he knew that within another twenty-four hours he would be able to start back to Sheila.

That evening, before he left, he dined out with some friends, and as he drove back to his hotel through the perfection of the summer night, his longing to have Sheila with him was so intense that it hurt.

It was the first time in his life that he had ever known the real ache of loneliness, and he vowed that he would never be parted from her again.

Reaching his hotel, he paused at the desk to get his key and any letters. Among them was one from Sheila, and as he walked toward the elevator he thrust it into an inner pocket.

Five minutes later he reached the door of his private suite and let himself in. The suite consisted of a sitting room off which a bedroom led, and to his surprise he noticed that the sitting-room door was ajar and that a light was burning within.

He supposed that one of the hotel servants was inside, and, thrusting the door open, he entered.

The next moment he stood still, an exclamation of amazed anger breaking from him at sight of the girl standing by the mantelpiece wearing a negligee of flame-colored chiffon.

"Good heavens, Della!" he cried sharply. "What are you doing here?"

She laughed, crushing her cigarette on an ash tray near by.

"You are surprised to see me?" she asked.

"Surprised!" Miles frowned as he saw that a supper table had been laid for two and that a pile of magazines and a jade cigarette box—evidently the property of his unwelcome visitor—lay in careless intimacy on the couch.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded again. "Who let you into my room?"



In spite of herself, her eyes lowered before the anger in his.

"I can't say you're very hospitable," she said, "but I didn't think you would be. I didn't have any difficulty in getting in here, though. You see, the hotel people believe that I am your wife."

"My wife!"

As the full meaning of her confession broke in upon him, Miles went livid with anger, and his voice had the dangerous coldness of ice as he spoke.

"I think you must have taken leave of your senses, Della. I can see no excuse for this intrusion whatever. If you will explain——"

"Explain!" she cut in fiercely. Suddenly she moved close to him, her burning eyes fixed on his. "Do you think that you can continue to treat me in this way?" she asked. "Did you ever imagine that I would endure being thrust on one side for that nobody?"

"Be silent!" he commanded. "If you must speak of my wife——"

"Your wife!" she sneered. "The girl who trapped you into marrying her!"

"Della, I have told you once why I married Sheila," he interrupted. "It was because I loved her. Until I met her I did not know what love meant."

"How can you say that?" she cried. "You cannot deny that you loved me, Miles." She drew nearer still, her alluring face raised to his. "You cannot deny that you loved me. Is it possible that you can have forgotten so soon?"

He looked embarrassed.

"No," he replied, "I have not forgotten, Della. But have you forgotten whose fault it was that I learned that my idol had feet of clay? It is time we understood each other clearly. I no longer feel any bitter-

ness against you," he continued, "because now I know that my feeling for you was only the mere shadow of what love can be. Thank heavens you gave me the chance of finding it out before it was too late."

Della clenched her hands until the nails bit into her palms. Incredible, almost impossible, as it seemed to her that he spoke the truth, she was forced to believe it—to realize that his passion for her was really dead, and that he cared only for the girl whom she hated so intensely.

Suddenly she raised her hands and laid them on his shoulders.

"Miles," she pleaded, "it can't be true. All your love for me cannot be dead. Oh, my dear, if you know how I have paid! My whole life is one long regret. To feel your arms about me, your lips on mine again, there is no risk I would not run. I know that you must despise me; you must think that I have no pride to come to you like this, but I couldn't keep away."

He tried to loosen her clinging hands.

"I think you must have taken leave of your senses, Della!" he exclaimed again. "If you have no thought or care for your own reputation, you might at least respect mine. I have no feeling of friendship for your husband, but I certainly object to his thinking that I would play such a trick on him as this."

"But he doesn't know what I have done," she answered recklessly. "And there is no reason for him or any one else ever to know. Only let me stay. You can't send me away now," she told him, still clinging to him desperately. "You can't turn me out at this hour."

For a moment he looked down at her in silence, feeling how strange



it was that her nearness should leave him unmoved.

With an angry gesture he freed himself and turned back toward the door.

"Miles," she cried, "where are you going?"

"It is quite true that I cannot turn you out," he answered coldly, "but I can at least go myself," and, giving her no chance for argument, he left.

There was something final in the sound of the closing door, something which told Della that she had failed.

She had staked everything, and lost. Never, as long as she lived, would she be able to win him back now.

She set her white teeth in impotent fury. At least, there was one thing left to her. The triumph of knowing that it lay in her power to shatter the happiness of the man who had scorned her.

She knew that she held a weapon which was capable of parting him forever from the girl he had dared to put in her place, and she would not hesitate to use it.

Try as he would to forget it, the recollection of that scene in his hotel suite poisoned Miles Beresford's home-coming.

His whole instinct was to tell Sheila what had happened, but the unwritten law, which makes it impossible for a man to give a girl away, sealed his lips.

He could not tell his wife or any one else, and if the truth came out he would be obliged to take the blame.

When at last the car swept through the gates and up the drive, he sprang out almost before the car stopped and, running up the steps, passed the butler in the hall and

turned, inquiring swiftly: "Where is Mrs. Beresford?"

"Mrs. Beresford left the house just after dinner, sir," was the reply.

"Left the house?" he echoed stupidly. "What do you mean? She hasn't gone away?"

"Yes," was the reply. "She left a letter for you in the library. Shall I——"

But already Miles Beresford was in the library, and the door had closed behind him.

As soon as he entered the room he saw the big square envelope on the mantelpiece and, snatching it up, ripped it open. As he drew out the piece of paper it contained, something dropped to the ground.

The inclosed letter and the fact that Mrs. Sinclair came to see me this evening, will explain why I refuse to remain any longer beneath your roof, and why I tell you that I hope I will never see you again as long as I live.

In a few days my lawyers will communicate with you, and for the future all communications must be through them.

SHEILA.

Feeling that he must be living in some horrible nightmare, Miles stared down at the sheet of note paper. Then his eyes fell on the object which had dropped to the floor, and, stooping, he picked it up.

It was the letter which had driven the girl he loved from him, and as he read it through a despairing cry broke from him.

July the fifteenth—the day after he had left for New York.

But that letter had been written a year before!

Sheila pulled a black felt hat over her hair and turned away from the mirror.

She hated to look at herself now to meet the tragedy in her reflected eyes which told her, even while she





*With an angry gesture he freed himself from her clinging arms. "It is quite true that I cannot turn you out," he said coldly, "but I can at least go myself," and, giving Della no chance for argument, Miles left.*

forced her lips to smile, that her heart was breaking for Miles Beresford.

It was a week since she had come back to New York. On her arrival

she had taken a room in a quiet house in the Village, and the next day had gone to a firm of lawyers, instructing them to begin divorce proceedings against her husband.



The private detective whose services they had called in had just sent in his report, and her lawyer had forwarded it to her this morning.

The letter lay on a table beside her bed, and as she walked over and picked it up, she felt as though each word was a knife in her heart.

She knew now, beyond all doubt, that Della had been at the hotel with Miles, and, knowing that, how was it possible for her to keep any belief in the man she had married?

Her lawyer wanted to see her, and she was going to keep the appointment, to tell him that they must put through the divorce proceedings as quickly as he could. For she felt that all she wanted now was to be rid of the man who had betrayed her so cruelly.

She was determined to have nothing more to do with him and not to touch a cent of his money. She was thankful she had a little of her own which she had managed to save while she was working.

When she reached the huge office building she found that she was early for her appointment, and she walked about until it was time for her to go up to see her lawyer.

As she paused, looking up at one of the old houses, a man came quickly down the steps and, seeing her, paused, uttering her name.

"Mrs. Beresford—this meeting has the added charm of the unexpected."

It was Gordon Sinclair!

He was the last person Sheila wanted to meet, but she was obliged to put her hand in his.

As his eyes met hers—those strangely brilliant eyes in the inscrutable mask of his face, she felt suddenly that she must tell him the truth, that she was about to name his wife as the correspondent in her divorce case.

"It's very nice of you to think so," she said hesitatingly; "but, when you know why I am here, I am afraid you won't think so any longer."

She told him then, but there was no alteration in his expression as he listened.

She could not guess the extent of the shock he had received, for he felt it difficult to believe that Miles Beresford had really done such a thing.

He knew Della; knew that she was utterly unscrupulous when she wanted anything, and he felt that the other man might not be as guilty as he appeared.

But he said nothing of this to Sheila. His only remark was:

"I suppose you realize that a scandal of this kind will finish your husband as far as public life is concerned? It doesn't matter to me, Mrs. Beresford—the name of Sinclair isn't so respected that another scandal more or less can harm it. But Beresford is one of the coming men in his profession, and it seems a pity."

She turned deathly white and her eyes widened.

"What is that to me?" she asked. "He must take the consequences of his folly."

He smiled.

"As long as you are quite sure that it is his folly. But I haven't any intention of divorcing my wife."

Sheila bit hard on her under lip. She told herself that she hated Miles, that he had taken her life and broken it—worse still, her love. Yet she did not want to ruin him.

"Why not wait a little while?" Gordon Sinclair asked. "Let me see my wife, and—why not see your husband?"

"Never!" Sheila clenched her hands. "Never as long as I live."



Even if I don't go on with these proceedings, I never want to see him again."

A clock struck, and she added quickly:

"I must go now or I'll be late for my appointment."

But, instead of bidding her good-by, he walked back to the office building beside her.

"If you don't mind, I'll wait until you come down again," he answered, and she could not refuse.

As she got into the elevator, her mind was in chaos again. Her decision to divorce Miles Beresford had at least been something firm to cling to, and, if that was to be taken away from her, she felt she would not know what to do.

When she emerged into the afternoon sunshine again, Gordon Sinclair was still waiting for her.

"And now," he said, "let us go and have some tea. I want to talk to you."

## CHAPTER VIII.

Getting into Sinclair's car a few minutes later, Sheila remembered what Miles had said regarding this man's friendship, and hoped defiantly that her husband would hear of her having been with him.

During the next hour, that liking which she had felt from the first for Della Sinclair's husband became firmly established. No one could have been kinder than this man, and there was no hint in his manner of anything but respect and a sincere desire to help her.

He himself was amused at the new rôle he was playing. Who would have believed that he was only anxious to bring her and her husband together again, or failing that, to help her to some sort of innocent happiness?

He did not understand himself, but he knew that the friendship he offered her was a sincere one.

Sheila found herself showing him more of her innermost heart than she had ever meant any one to see. It was a relief to talk to some one frankly, and before long he knew her whole story, beginning from that night when she had made the mistake of going to Miles Beresford's apartment.

"Of course," he told her, "I think it is entirely wrong of you not to let your husband support you. You have every right to his money, but since you are so independent, how do you propose to live?"

"I'm going to get work," she answered obstinately. "Any sort of work so long as it's work. After all, I always have worked for my living."

He nodded.

"Very well. Let me help you. There is a small dress shop in East Fifty-third Street in which I have an interest. The girl I had who ran the place has left to be married. How would you like the job?"

"Do you really mean it?" Sheila asked eagerly. "It's wonderfully good of you."

"Good!" He laughed again. "My child, have you ever heard of *Red Riding Hood* and the wolf?"

She nodded.

"Yes, but in this case I am not afraid of the wolf," she told him firmly, and something in her answer touched him strangely.

Although in that fateful interview Della had assured Sheila that she was going to Gordon to tell him that she had given him grounds for divorce, she had no such intention.

Della meant to wait and see what use Miles Beresford's wife made of the information which she had given



her before she committed herself to any definite action.

If Sheila named her in a divorce suit, there was still the chance that Miles would offer her his name, but if, on the other hand, his wife refused to divorce him and she had told Gordon what she had done, she might find herself in difficulties. And so she had waited.

Della knew that the man she loved was in New York, but she was content to remain in the country. She knew also from her maid, whose sister had waited on Sheila, that the other girl had left the house suddenly before Miles's return, but for a week that was all that Della did know.

She was thinking of this on the same afternoon that Sheila went to see her lawyer, when her husband came in without his usual ceremonious knock on her door.

Looking up from the novel she was reading, she knew at once that something had gone wrong.

She waited for him to speak, her brows a little raised, and she had not very long to wait.

Standing with his back to the fireplace, Gordon told her briefly of his meeting with Sheila.

"I found the information most interesting," he observed, "and I think you have me to thank for preventing a scandal."

Della bit her lip, feeling in that moment that she hated the man she had married as never before. It was enough to drive her mad to see him standing there, so suave and calm, and to be unable to guess what was in his mind.

"If you have prevented Miles Beresford from being divorced by his wife, I don't think I have anything to thank you for," she retorted, flinging up her head and meeting his narrowed eyes defiantly.

"No?" he asked softly. "Surely you don't want your name dragged through the mud, when there isn't any chance of your being able to whitewash it by changing it for the one of the man who is accused of being your sweetheart. My dear Della, I have to assure you once again that no matter what you do, I have no intention of divorcing you. On the other hand, if any open scandal should really touch you, I should not consider it necessary to give you the shelter of my roof, neither should I allow you more money than would prevent you from being actually in want."

She turned deathly pale. Never before had she realized how utterly ruthless he could be. She knew that to try and break down his will was like throwing herself against a stone wall.

Unable to control herself, she burst out.

"I hate you! Oh, how I hate you!"

He laughed.

"You compliment me. You have been very indiscreet, and I should like to know whether it was by your arrangement or by Miles Beresford's that you were registered at the Hotel Setton as his wife."

"It is enough for you to know that I was there," she answered recklessly, "and that I spent the night there in his private suite."

"And was Miles Beresford also there?" he asked softly, watching her intently.

For an instant Della had the uncanny feeling that he could read the innermost secrets of her mind, and she drew back instinctively.

He saw the shadow of fear cross her face, and knew that he had guessed right.

"It doesn't matter. I shall not bother about an answer to that



question now. But I warn you—and remember that it is not the first time—not to mix yourself up any further in this matter.”

“And meanwhile to leave the road clear for you and Sheila Beresford,” she taunted sneeringly. “Do you think that I am blind,

that I do not know your interest in her affairs is prompted by——”



“My dear Della, no matter what you do, I have no intention of divorcing you. But if any open scandal should touch you, I should not consider it necessary to give you the shelter of my roof, neither should I allow you more money than would prevent you from being actually in want.”



But she went no further. Something behind the still mask of her husband's face stopped the words on her lips.

She was afraid. She knew she dare not try him too far.

When Sheila took up the position which Gordon Sinclair had suggested for her, to her relief she found that there was plenty of work attached to the running of the tiny shop where exquisite clothes and hats and lingerie were sold.

It was fascinating work, and helped by her former experience, she soon became used to it.

She thanked Heaven that it filled her days, but the shop did not open until half past nine, and it closed every evening at six, so that there were still many hours in which she could think, and be tortured by her memories.

The long, lonely nights, when hour after hour she lay wide-eyed staring into the darkness, were haunted by memories that threatened to burn her heart away in fires of longing and regret.

If only she could forget!

What use in those hours to tell herself that she hated the man whom she believed had wronged her so cruelly? Alone with her own heart, she knew that the thing which tortured it was not hate, but love—love that once given cannot be taken back.

Gordon Sinclair had formed a habit of calling at the shop about half past four, and she would give him tea in the little room which was her office.

He did not ask her to go out with him often; perhaps because he himself knew how injurious it would be for her to be seen in his company, but on the rare occasions when he proposed that she should dine with

him, he took her to a small, very quiet restaurant where the cooking was perfect, and which was patronized by few people likely to recognize them.

The place interested Sheila, and she found Gordon a delightful host and companion. He had been all over the world, known every one worth knowing, and to listen to him talk took her thoughts away from herself and the weight of misery with which her heart was loaded.

When he had to go to Paris on business, she missed his friendship badly, and after he had been away two weeks, he cabled, telling her that he was coming back, and asking her to keep the evening of his return free. He would call for her at her apartment, and they would go to the usual place for dinner.

But obeying a sudden impulse, Sheila decided that Sinclair should remain and dine with her. She felt sure that he would enjoy it, and she would surprise him by having everything ready when he arrived.

After all, there was no harm in it. Whatever the world said of him, he had befriended her in her unhappiness, and she was glad to know him worthy of her friendship.

She was dressed and waiting by the time he had told her he would arrive.

She was putting the finishing touches to the dinner table which she had laid herself, when the bell rang downstairs, and a moment later she heard footsteps.

It was only when she heard the visitor pause on the landing outside that she remembered he had never been there before, and as she crossed the room she called out a gay: "Come in—I'm here."

She had almost reached the door when it opened, and she stood still, staring at the man who entered.



For instead of the visitor she had expected, she found herself facing Miles Beresford, her husband!

"You!" Sheila's stiff lips formed the words, and then anger flamed up in her. "How dare you come here?" she exclaimed. "Who gave you my address?"

"Since I could get no one to do so, there was only one course left open to me," he replied. "Much as I disliked doing so, I called in the help of a private detective, who soon found you."

His voice sounded cold, but beneath his calm exterior his heart was beating madly.

For one mad moment he was filled with the impulse to crush her in his arms and press his lips to her red, scornful mouth, but the thought of how much there was to be said between them kept him back.

"Your methods are entirely worthy of you," she told him, though her own heart was burning and aching until she felt that she must cry out with the agony.

He flushed darkly. "I had to see you," he replied. "Things couldn't go on as they were. You have returned my letters through your lawyers unopened, hidden yourself from me all these weeks. You left my house without giving me a chance to say even one word for myself. Don't you know that the greatest criminal has the right to defend himself?"

"You have no defense," she answered fiercely. "And I don't even want to know now why you should have done this thing to me. Why you should have taken the trouble to lie to win my love, and then go straight from my arms to those of that——"

"It isn't true!" he interrupted sharply.

"Not true?" She gave a scornful laugh which somehow broke.

"Are you going to tell me that that letter asking Della Sinclair to come to you, saying that you had tried to live without her and couldn't, wasn't written by you?"

"No."

"And yet you dare to come here!"

"Yes." He moved a step nearer. "That letter was written a year ago. You knew that I had once imagined myself in love with Della. I wrote that letter just after I heard she was going to marry Sinclair. I wanted to see her, to try to win her back. It was written on the mad impulse of the moment. I dated it, but forgot to put the year."

For an instant Sheila almost allowed herself to believe him.

"If that is true," she said, "how did Mrs. Sinclair come to be at the hotel with you, registered as your wife? Can you deny that that was so?"

"I can only tell you," Miles replied wearily, "that she was not there by my wish. I can only beg you to believe that she meant nothing—less than nothing to me."

"You say that she was nothing to you!" she said bitterly. "Can you deny that she was with you at your hotel, passing as your wife?"

"No, but——"

He would have taken her hands, but she pushed him away.

"I hate you!" she cried. "Don't dare to touch me. I don't pretend to understand what brought you here, but I suppose there are men like you who believe that a girl will be fooled by any tale they tell. Go"—she pointed to the door—"you have no part in my life any longer, and I never want to see you again."

His lips set. "Listen to me, Sheila," he commanded. "You may have made up your mind to cut me out of your life, but that doesn't change the fact that you are my





*"You say that Della Sinclair was nothing to you!" Sheila said bitterly. "If that is true, how did Mrs. Sinclair come to be at the hotel with you, registered as your wife? Can you deny that that was so?"*

wife, and I have the right to provide for you. I cannot have you working for your living. You must accept an allowance from me. How

can you earn enough to live as you should live? What are you doing?"

He glanced around the small room. There was nothing luxuri-



ous about her surroundings, but he could see that she must be earning enough to afford the small apartment.

"What is that to you?" she asked. "I have found work to do, and I am not quite friendless. Now, if you will go——"

A sudden suspicion flamed up in him.

"Sheila, you are not seeing Gordon Sinclair?" he demanded.

"What business is it of yours who I am seeing, or what I am doing?" she said furiously, but her color had deepened.

"So that is your reason for wishing to be rid of me!" he said tensely. "You refuse to believe in my innocence, and yet you encourage the attentions of a man so vile that——"

"Be silent!" she broke in. "He is——"

She broke off. Some one was coming upstairs, and she felt her heart miss a beat.

There was a knock on the door, and Sheila hurried to open it. She sighed with relief when she saw it was the elevator boy, who handed her a letter.

"This just came for you by messenger," he said.

Sheila took the envelope without looking at it, and as the boy turned away, added casually:

"Will you show this gentleman out, please, Jim? If he calls again, I'm not at home."

A dark flush rose under Miles Beresford's skin, and his eyes blazed at the insult. But pride forbade him to argue, and without a word he went out.

As she looked after him, Sheila was filled with a sudden wild impulse to recall him, to tell him that if he

could make her believe that he really cared for her, nothing else in the world would matter.

What was the use of lying to herself any longer? This meeting had cleared the mist of self-deception from her heart, and she knew that if she hated him, it was only with a hatred that was born of her love for him.

She took a swift step forward, but suddenly before her eyes there rose a vision of the mocking, scarlet-lipped face of Della, whom she believed to be her rival.

For a moment she stood swaying in an agony which seemed almost too great to bear. Then as she sank into a chair, she looked down at the envelope she still held in her hand, and saw that it was addressed in Gordon Sinclair's handwriting.

MY DEAR SHEILA: I'm very disappointed that I shall not be able to call for you tonight, but I felt ill on my arrival, and shall have to keep quiet for a few hours. I shall be at the shop at the usual hour tomorrow afternoon. There are quite a lot of things I am anxious to talk to you about.

GORDON SINCLAIR.

In her relief at the knowledge that she would not have to entertain him that evening, to force herself to be cheerful and act as though nothing was wrong, Sheila did not notice how uneven was his usually firm handwriting, or wonder as to the nature of his illness.

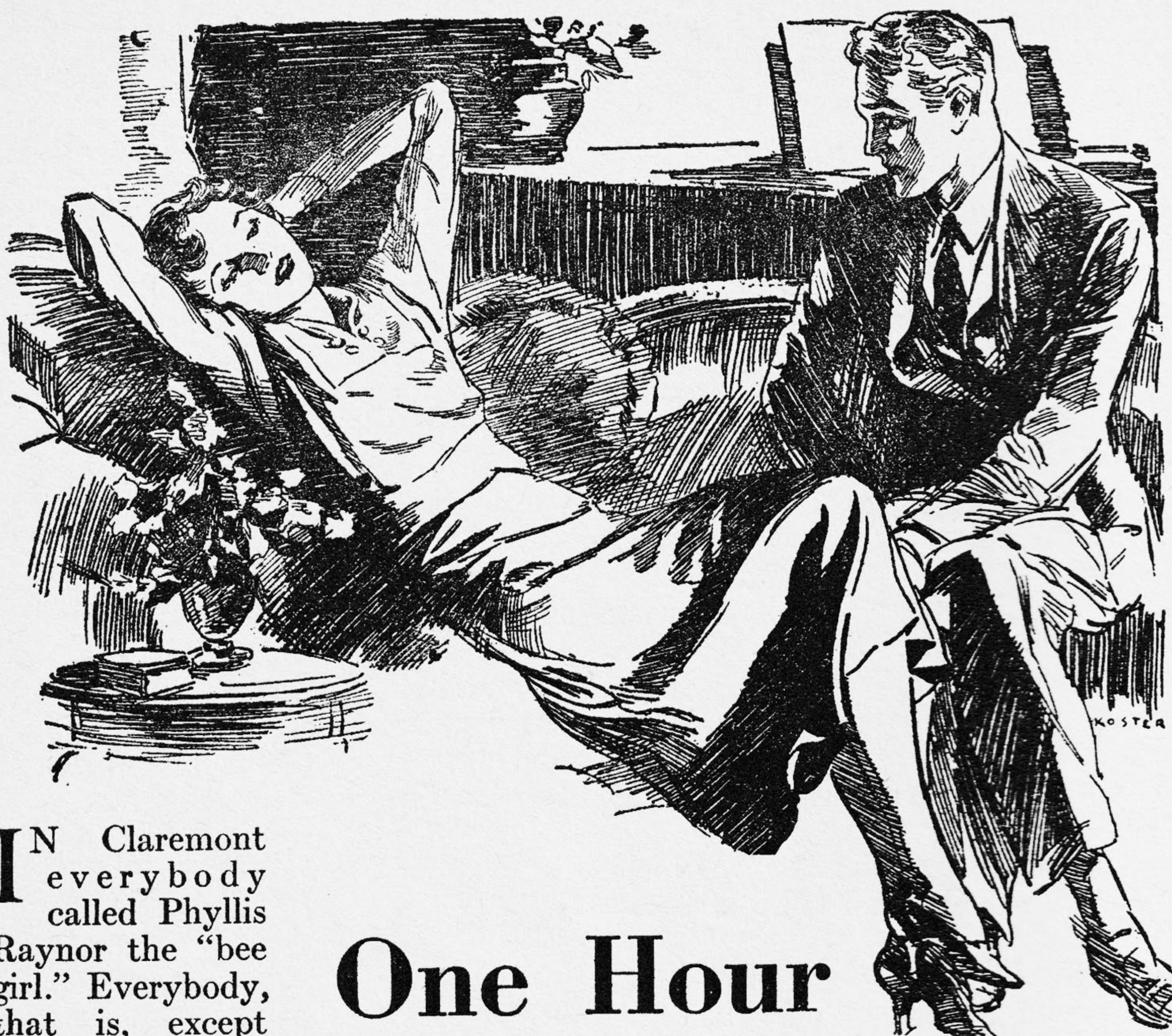
It was impossible to give him a second thought when her whole mind was filled with Miles Beresford.

Wearily she wondered how it was all going to end. Try as she would, she could see no ray of sunshine breaking through the dark pall which shrouded the future.

TO BE CONCLUDED.

+





**I**N Claremont everybody called Phyllis Raynor the "bee girl." Everybody, that is, except Harry Franks, and he called her "honey girl." Phil liked to have Harry call her pet names; it gave her a feeling like drinking icy-cold lemonade on a hot afternoon.

They'd been engaged for four months and a half, the wedding was set for the sixteenth of July and Phil was having a grand time buying her trousseau things. There were dresses, and shoes, and pajamas—all of which she showed to Harry while she fairly danced with excitement. Phil was as happy as a bear would have been if he could have gained entrance to one of her honey storerooms.

People called Phil the bee girl be-

# One Hour

By  
**Marie Hoyt**

cause she took care of the apiary, behind the cottage in which she lived. And not only did she take

care of it, but she made it a well-paying business. The bees had belonged to her father and she had learned the secret of caring for them from him. When he had died the year before, it had been her only financial salvation. The cottage she lived in was a tiny dream of a thing, and it was going to be even more of a dream when Harry was installed as its master.

Harry was taller than Phil, which was saying quite a good deal. But where she was graceful, and wiry, and demurely enchanting, he was



broad-shouldered and handsome. Harry was manager of Claremont's largest grocery store and because all the farmers for miles around traded with him, its volume of business ran into thousands of dollars every week, on which Harry received a commission.

Harry was always kept late at the store Saturday nights but Phil always waited up for him to stop in and say good night. When the weather was chilly she had a fire in the huge fireplace and pulled her small divan up in front of it. And within a few minutes after his arrival she had coffee and something good and tasty for a hungry man to eat.

On this particular Saturday night they had just finished their coffee and sandwiches and were sitting on the divan together, talking about the coming wedding, and Harry was saying that he wished they could do away with all the fuss because he was sure that he was going to make a mistake about something.

He was interrupted by the sudden ringing of the doorbell. Phil stretched herself lazily and rose slowly to her feet.

"I know who it is," she said. "It's Jimmy Kenyon, from the telegraph office. The Root people have been trying to buy that hundred cans of extracted honey I have. They've wasted enough in telegrams to have made up the difference between what they're offering and what I'm asking."

She went into the tiny hallway, and snapped on the outside lights. Then she opened the door.

Three men stood outside. They were small, rat-faced men, and one of them, hidden from the sight of any late passer-by in the street by the other two, held a revolver pointed at Phil.

"Keep your mouth shut," he grated, "or I'll drill you. And I'd do it as quick as I'd breathe."

The three men moved into the hallway, and the man with the revolver stepped to the living-room door. His companions watched Phil.

"Listen, you," the leader said to Harry, who had started forward, "just turn around and walk back to that couch. And keep your hands up. What I told her, goes for you. I'd just as soon drill you as breathe. And you wouldn't be the first guy I'd bumped off, either."

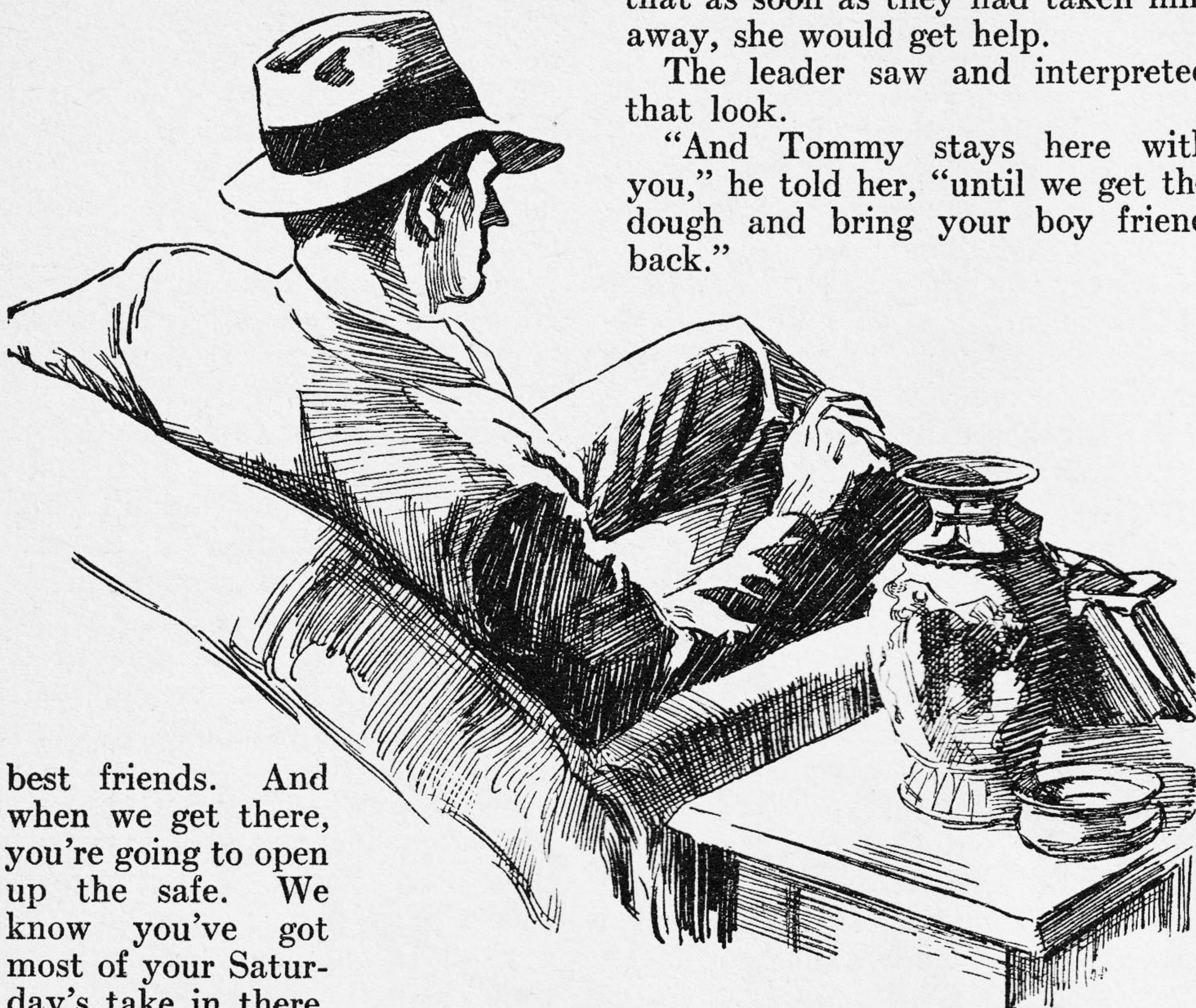
Harry hesitated a moment, but that revolver with its blue steel barrel gleaming in the light of the bridge lamp, was a very powerful argument. He sat down again, his hands up.

"Now you"—the man turned to Phil—"go over and draw down those two shades. Do it nice and natural, as if you and the boy friend wanted to indulge in a little petting."

Phil walked over to the window, because there didn't seem to be anything else to do. She pulled down the two shades, and then turned around. Her mind raced to the telephone, the neighbors, every possible source of help. But the telephone was in the hall, and the neighbors were asleep. Even the night watchman was probably sitting in the front windows of the Pickwick Club at that hour of the night. His second round didn't start till two o'clock. And even if he should come past, he wouldn't think that anything was wrong.

"Now," the leader said, "I'm going to call the shots around here, and you two are going to like it. See? You, big boy, are going to the store with us and we're going to be just as chummy as if we were your





best friends. And when we get there, you're going to open up the safe. We know you've got most of your Saturday's take in there, because there wasn't any way for you to deposit it to-night. If we meet the cop they've got here, you're going to tell him we're going after ginger ale for a party. We're a couple of old friends of yours from out of town. Get it? I'll be covering you and Jerry will bump off the cop if you squeal. So don't try anything funny."

Phil knew from the cold, hard look in the man's eyes that he would do exactly as he said. And she prayed that Harry would obey him; wouldn't do anything foolish. Bravery was one thing. Foolhardiness was another. Life was a dear price to pay for somebody else's money, no matter how much it was. As Harry hesitated, she nodded her head ever so slightly, her eyes pleading. She wanted him to understand

that as soon as they had taken him away, she would get help.

The leader saw and interpreted that look.

"And Tommy stays here with you," he told her, "until we get the dough and bring your boy friend back."

As the men prepared to take Harry away with them, Phil tried to convince herself that it was something she was dreaming. It had all come so suddenly. She wondered how they had known where to find Harry, and realized instantly that if they had been in town long, they could easily have found out that he spent every evening with her.

Harry, the leader, and the man called Jerry, went out the front door. Phil could hear them talking and laughing as they walked down the gravel path. The man Tommy sat down in the chair next to the door, his hand in his coat pocket. He did not relax his vigilance even for a second. Phil realized that he was not a person she could trick easily. Indeed, at that moment she had no intention of trying to trick





*Her captor sat down, his hand in his coat pocket. He did not relax his vigilance even for a second, Phyllis realized that he was not a person she could trick easily.*

him. However, fear was giving place to anger, and that anger was momentarily growing more deadly.

As she sat on the divan, she began to think, to speculate as to the results of this robbery. Would people believe that Harry actually had been forced to go to the store and open the safe? And if they did believe that, would they realize, in the terror-dispelling daylight of a Sunday morning, how desperate had been his plight the night before? Would they feel that he should have refused to open the safe, and should

have defied the robbers? Would they feel that he should have attacked three men, all heavily armed? Silly as it seemed to her, she knew that some people would believe the worst of him.

Would his employers credit the story, or would they think it all a clever scheme to defraud them of their money? She could testify to the truth of what Harry told them, but wouldn't people think that she had lied to help her man?

Those points, and others like them, troubled her. The whole thing might cause an indefinite postponement of the wedding. That day for which she had been living might be snatched from her forever. And it seemed to Phil that she never could stand that. In rapid succession, her mind rejected a number of plans. And then suddenly *the* plan occurred to her. It would be dangerous. But if everything worked out all right, no harm could come to her. She preferred not to think about what might happen if something went wrong. Before her courage could ebb, she began to

translate her idea into action. She rose and stretched. Instantly her captor was on guard.

"How long will they be gone?" she asked him.

"Not long," he told her ungraciously.

"Any objection to my smoking?" He shook his head.

She reached over, raised the lid of the little cigarette box on the end table, and took a cigarette from it. Leisurely she lit it—did it well, considering that she was woefully lacking in practice. Then she looked up.



"Cigarette?" she asked.

She could almost read his mind. She knew that he was asking himself whether this was a trick. Suspicion flamed in his eyes. As she stood there, she watched it die. He was deciding there was no trick she could play on him, since he was armed. Besides, she was only a girl. She would be absurdly easy for him to handle. Phil knew his nerves were tense; that he wanted a cigarette.

"You light it for me," he said. "I'll be needing both my hands, and I'm not taking my eyes off you."

He thought he had fathomed her trick, and was guarding against it.

Calmly she took another cigarette, lit it, and started toward him along the edge of the rug. In spite of everything she could do, her eyes almost dropped downward. But rigidly she forced herself to smile and look straight at the man. She mustn't look down. For if she did, he would look down too, and that would be fatal.

Originally the bridge lamp in the far corner of the room had been beside the comfortable divan. But since Harry had become a steady caller, Phil had moved it. She had lengthened the cord, and run it under the rug to the lamp's new position. The base plug was behind the easy-chair, and about four inches of the cord showed between the easy-chair and the rug.

As Phil took her third step forward, she kicked that cord. There was a flash from behind the chair, then complete darkness. And Phil leaped aside with the quickness of a cat. That was the dangerous time. But she had planned carefully. The man fired, flame shooting out into the room, but Phil felt only a ringing in her ears from the explosion. She crouched against the wall and crawled toward the place where the

man had been sitting. She heard him rush past her, as she had expected him to do, toward the bedroom door. She crawled to the hall, rose and crossed to the dining-room door, which squeaked as she opened it, and instantly she heard the man charging toward her through the living room. There was no time for caution now. She ran through the dining room, and as she ran, she pulled chairs into the path behind her. They might help a little. She dashed through the kitchen as he was entering the dining room, threw open the back door and fled out into the yard.

She did not keep to the walk, but ran across the yard, the man following her relentlessly. He was gaining very rapidly, because she was taking a zigzag course.

Then suddenly there was a splintering crash, and a loud oath, the sound of breaking wood and a body falling. Then came a low, ominous, buzzing drone, ever increasing in volume as the bees rallied in defense of their ruined hive.

Then Phil heard surprised, pained shouts. The man got up and started toward her again, but there was another crash, and the drone became still louder. Then the man turned and ran toward the street. He yelled and thrashed his arms in sheer pain and terror as he ran, and when he passed under the light on the corner, something that looked like a trailing scarf hung out behind his head.

Phil, who had led him through those hives with a sureness born of years and years of work among the bees, did not wait to find out what would become of her jailer. Instead she climbed the back fence and ran to the Pickwick Club as fast as she could.

One hour from the time the door-



bell had first rung, Phil and Harry were again seated on the divan in front of a replenished fire. Their voices were excited as they recalled every minute of this, their great adventure. The lamp cord had again been plugged into the socket behind the easy-chair.

"But it was dangerous, honey," he told her worriedly for something like the tenth time. "You shouldn't have done it. Suppose something had happened. Suppose that bullet had hit you?"

He motioned toward a hole in the wall where the robber's bullet had crashed through into the bedroom.

"I guess I realized that it was dangerous," she said. "But I was so angry I didn't care. I thought it might somehow spoil our—our wedding plans. Or that those men might hurt you. It didn't seem to matter that it was dangerous. I wasn't so terribly frightened, either."

"Phil, honey, you were grand," he assured her, humble adoration in his eyes. "You were the bravest, dearest girl in the world. Golly, if I appreciated you before—and believe me I did—now I think you're a regular female Solomon and Napoleon rolled into one."

"No," Phil said thoughtfully, "I'm not that, Harry. I guess I'm just a girl, crazy in love. That

about covers it. Maybe I'm selfish, too. I didn't want to live here in this house alone any longer. And all those things I'd bought; I wanted to use them for you."

"It was lucky he ran into those beehives," Harry went on, after a few moments' pause, "or even your cleverness in putting out the light wouldn't have got the cop there in time. That was——"

He paused, and his eyes and mouth opened as if a great idea had suddenly dawned on him. His look of amazement gave way to one of delighted incredulity, and he grabbed Phil by both shoulders.

"Look here, young lady," he said, "did you actually think of those bees before you went out there? Were you leading him into them?"

Phil looked at him with a wide-eyed, mock-innocent stare.

"Why, no, Harry," she said. "It just—just happened."

With a whoop he gathered her into his arms.

"Little fibber," he said softly, drawing her close and tenderly, eagerly kissing her yielding lips.

And Phil, gloriously happy, admitted that she had been a fibber, but that as it had been for a good cause she thought that she ought to be forgiven and Harry, kissing her again, heartily agreed with her.



### YOUR EYES

YOUR eyes laugh gayly down to mine,  
 My eyes look up to yours.  
 My hands are very little ships  
 That find your hands their shores.  
 Your feet that led mine in the dance  
 And never let them falter,  
 Now lead them down a ribboned aisle  
 Straight to a tall white altar!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.





# Moonlight Marriage

By Jane Littell

**P**OOOR Harriet! You just naturally called her that. She was so fat, and her clothes always seemed wrong, and the powder just wouldn't stay on her nose.

She was the receptionist and telephone operator in the New York office of a man who was a scout for new talent for a Hollywood movie studio. Her boss had a theory that fat girls had better dispositions than thin ones, and weren't so likely to leave him unexpectedly to be married.

Harriet always had been fat. She tried half-heartedly to diet, but she

never expected it to do any good, and it didn't because Harriet simply had no will power where chocolate cake and candy and ice cream were concerned. And because she was like a cheerful dragon guarding the gate to the boss's private sanctum, plenty of callers dropped boxes of chocolates on her desk.

People rarely noticed Harriet's lovely hands and her big, wistful blue eyes. For one reason, the reception room was always filled with beautiful, slender, perfectly groomed girls who were trying to get the boss to send them to Hollywood. By con-



trast, Harriet seemed like a mountain of a girl. She was frightfully sensitive about her weight in contrast to such beautiful creatures, but she liked her job and she got a good salary and it never occurred to her she would be happier somewhere else.

Another reason why you couldn't have pried her away from her job was that men who wanted to see the boss (when he didn't want to see them) weren't above bribing Harriet with dinners and theaters.

So Harriet wasn't beardless by any means. But she sure was short on romance. And she longed for a great love all her own with every fiber of her romantic soul.

Harriet's toughest break was that she made nearly all her acquaintances at the office, and girls as well as men were nice to her in hopes of the favor being returned. The difference was that the girls were wise enough to see that Harriet would rather have a man hold her hand and whisper sweet nothings to her than eat the grandest dinners or see the best shows in the world. So Harriet was included in a lot of parties, and the girl who included her usually took her own most dependable beau aside in advance and gave him his orders.

And Harriet went blissfully along taking all the attentions at their face value and praying that one of the nice men she was always meeting at parties would turn out to be her own grand romance. She told every new man she met that she and her sister had an apartment, and gave him her telephone number. But none of them ever called.

Harriet pretended to herself that the reason was that she was out so much. She must have missed their calls. And not even her sister knew the private anguish she endured be-

cause no man ever liked her well enough to see her a second time.

It was a girl named Caris who finally brought romance into Harriet's life. Caris was trying to sell a story script to Harriet's boss, and she was in and out of the office a lot. Caris was clever and gay and slim and attractive, and she was so nice to Harriet that Harriet just about worshiped her. One night when they were alone in Caris's apartment, Harriet broke down and completely exposed her lonely soul, and Caris promised to do something about it.

Caris went on a West Indian cruise soon after that, and met an engineer who had been isolated in the oil fields of Venezuela for a year and was soon to start for home. Somehow, the conversation got around to what sort of girls this Gerry Eberhard preferred.

"Not the lathlike thin ones," he insisted. "I've been down here long enough to see the sense in the Latin idea of beauty. Last time I was home, every girl I met was dieted down to bones and outraged nerves. Now a Latin knows that a fat woman is a placid, contented woman. Me for 'em not too thin."

"I know just the girl for you," said Caris, smiling a little at the picture of Harriet reacting to attention from this perfectly grand he-man. "I'll give you a letter to her, and I'll write her about you."

Caris was pretty shrewd about people. She knew that Gerry had been in South America for a year, and that he was going back to New York on a Spanish boat, and that there probably wouldn't be a streamline figure on the boat. Harriet wouldn't look so awfully fat to him after he had been seeing two-hundred-pound Spanish ladies waddling around the deck.



When Harriet read Caris's letter, she was all ready to lope out and buy a wedding dress, without even seeing Gerry Eberhard. A man who wouldn't mind if she was fat!

Caris had written:

Gerry was born for adventure as the birds are born to fly. He's perfectly marvelous! His red hair stands straight up, and he's got the sort of gray eyes that a girl would give ten years of her life for—black rings around the irises and thick black lashes. He isn't handsome, unless you go in for granite-faced men. But when he smiles! Those teeth! Those eyes! That mouth!

But promise me, Harriet, you'll grab him while the grabbing is good. If he proposes to you the first time he's with you, don't stall. Grab him! I'm telling you.

Caris's letter also said that a man isolated in the bush for a year is so woman hungry that he wants to marry the first woman he sees. She was hoping Harriet would be smart enough to take advantage of it. For any girl would love Gerry, and Harriet was so love starved that she would worship him forever if he gave her the least chance.

Caris was figuring that she was doing them both a good turn. Gerry would be getting the sort of wife he said he preferred, and if ever a girl was cut out for sweet domesticity, it was Harriet.

Harriet was shrewd enough not to let Gerry come to the office to meet her the day he telephoned and invited her to have tea with him. She asked him to meet her at her apartment, and she rushed home breathless with excited anticipation to get into a new dress she had bought especially for the event. It had lovely graceful lines that made her look smarter than she had ever looked in her life.

When the bell rang, she answered it with a shy, sweet smile, and Gerry really didn't register anything but

those great limpid blue eyes of hers. He'd been looking into black eyes—when he looked at eyes at all—for more than a year.

"You are very charming to take pity on a lonely man," he said, still holding the beautiful hand she gave him in greeting. He was looking down at it, too, and he opened his hand that was holding hers to stare at it. So white, so smooth, so nicely shaped. Harriet really got a break there, for her two real beauties were the things which Gerry saw and remembered.

"You must let me keep you out of mischief while you are in New York," said Harriet, with a new surge of happiness.

He *was* marvelous! Caris hadn't said the half of it. And he didn't like thin girls. Oh, I want him! I've simply got to have him!

"Shall we trot right along?" he asked, but his eyes roved wistfully over the comfortable living room with its grand piano, and its deep, comfortable chairs. "We'll scarcely finish tea before it will be dinner time, and I took the chance that you would spend the evening with me and got theater tickets. Will you? Caris said you would be kind to me."

"I saved the evening for you," said Harriet. "I—I thought you might be lonely."

But her heart was saying: "He's marvelous! Marvelous! Marvelous!" The word roared in her ears, pounded with every beat of her heart, surged in and out of her body with every breath. And her lips went on to say politely:

"We don't want a heavy tea. Let me make a cup here, and we can talk until it's time for dinner. You can take me to Pierre's for tea some other day."

"Will you?" he asked, smiling.



And his smile made him a different person.

Harriet was completely mad about him.

"I'll put the water on for tea and we can talk until it boils," said Harriet happily, taking his hat and coat, showing him the most comfortable chair, bringing him cigarettes and matches.

She was out in the kitchen, lighting the gas, filling the kettle, when her sister Dora came bursting in the hall door that was right there beside the kitchen.

"Well!" said Dora, surprised at seeing her. "What happened to your big moment? Somebody beat you to him?"

"Ssh!" whispered Harriet frantically, pointing energetically toward the living room. Dora made a face to show that she understood, and Harriet said aloud:

"What are you talking about?"

"Don," said Dora with a grin, thinking fast. "I thought you were going places with Don."

"This friend of Caris's is here—Gerry Eberhard. I'm spending the evening with him." As if Dora didn't know that!

"Hard luck for Don. Well, I'll take him off your hands for the evening," said Dora, still grinning as she strolled on toward the living room, Harriet right at her heels.

Don was Dora's own best beau, and was due any minute. Harriet prayed they would go out at once. Even if Gerry didn't like thin girls, Dora was just too pretty and cute and little to have Gerry making comparisons. Harriet's blue eyes were anxious and worried as she stared from her sister to the new man.

"I couldn't help hearing," said Gerry apologetically. "If I've crashed in and spoiled a date for you, Harriet, I'll—I'll see you an-

other evening." But he looked disappointed and downcast as he said it.

"Give me a break, will you?" said Dora, thinking fast and lying swiftly to cover up her blunder. "I only get a chance at Don when sis has another date. You wouldn't do a poor girl out of a swell evening, would you?"

Gerry looked at Harriet for confirmation, and she gulped and said miserably, hating to lie and having to!

"I—Don's just a friend—a nice boy we both go out with. He doesn't care which of us he spends the evening with."

"Sez you!" scoffed Dora, heading for the bedroom. That was one honest remark, anyway. Don would raise the roof if he had to spend an evening alone with Harriet.

But Dora was much wiser in the ways of men than her sister, and she knew they hadn't done Harriet's cause any harm.

"Well, I get Don to-night, anyway," said Dora from the bedroom door. "Only don't tell him we argued over him, will you, big man from the jungles?"

"No," promised Gerry with a laugh. "Lordy! Wouldn't it be fun to have two girls arguing over me? Harriet, you've just got to put off all your other men friends while I'm in town. Caris said you would."

Behind his back, Dora covered up a wide grin with her hand in comical fashion and then ducked into the bedroom.

"If Caris said I would, I'll have to, of course," said Harriet, a strained smile on her lips, but that wistful anxious look still in her eyes.

It would be terrible to have everything spoiled before it had begun, just by Dora's smart remarks. It was perfectly awful how much trou-



ble and lying it took to cover up just one remark that shouldn't have been made.

Harriet was too inexperienced to know that if she and Dora had planned that little talk in advance, they couldn't have figured out any better way to make Gerry want to spend a lot of time with her.

Presently Don came, and they all had a hurried tea, and Don and Dora sat chatting with Gerry while Harriet slipped into a dinner dress. They had planned that she and Gerry would taxi to his hotel together, and she would wait in the lobby while he changed into dinner clothes. They were going to have to hurry through dinner, anyway, to get to the theater on time, and Gerry said he didn't want to leave such a busy and popular girl even long enough to go to his hotel and dress, for fear some one would steal her away from him.

Harriet rode along beside him, almost bursting with pride. He liked her already! Every word he said showed it. He didn't seem like a stranger at all, and there wasn't any embarrassed hunting for subjects to talk about at all.

"Your sister is very attractive, isn't she?" he said as they were riding along. "But couldn't you get her to fatten up a little? She's so terribly thin."

Harriet could only gasp! Dora's slim figure was her greatest pride. She exercised like an athlete and dieted like a movie star to keep it. Even then she didn't think she was as sylphlike as she ought to be.

"Maybe I do lean toward the Latin idea of beauty," Gerry went on. "But when I dance with a girl, I don't want a bag of bones in my arms. Do you suppose we can find a place to dance after the show?"

Harriet was simply speechless with delight at that. Gerry not only

didn't insist that a girl be thin, but he actually didn't like thin girls! Was he meant for her? Well, rather!

"Oh, he's mine! He's got to be mine!"

The thought hammered in her brain so hard she was afraid the man beside her would hear it.

She had time while he was dressing to get hold of herself a little, but she knew she was showing how she felt about him. A couple, strolling past as Gerry came rushing up to her said, and she couldn't help but hear them:

"Look at that girl's eyes!"

"Can't hide love, can you?"

If only Gerry hadn't heard it! That was her first, embarrassed thought. But maybe it wouldn't hurt if he did, was her second.

"Was I long?" he asked.

"Ages!" she laughed up at him, rising to go.

Dinner passed in a dream. A mad, delightful, heavenly dream. Harriet hadn't the slightest idea what the show was about. In the middle of the first act, Gerry reached over and caught her hand, and cuddled it in both of his all the rest of the performance. That meant something! It *must* mean something!

After that they went to the smartest night club in town to dance, and Gerry said, tightening his arm about her and smiling down into her eyes, "Just right." And Harriet thought she would die of happiness.

It was too absolutely perfect—to find a man who didn't care if she was a little plump.

"You look absolutely goofy!" chirped Dora from the big bed they shared when Harriet got home. "You must have fallen for him like a ton of brick. Is he that hot?"

"He's mar-velous!" breathed Harriet.

"Well, grab him," said Dora,



turning over to go back to sleep. "He looks like anybody's easy money. But stick around close. Don't give him a chance to make comparisons."

After which sisterly remark she went promptly to sleep, while Harriet lay beside her and dreamed the night through with wide open eyes.

Even so, when she met him at Pierre's for tea the next evening, nobody could have told that she hadn't had any sleep. She was simply radiant with happiness.

And this time she had hot chocolate, and chocolate ice cream with chocolate sauce and chocolate cake with whipped cream on it, and ate every scrap of them without the least twinge of conscience. It was heavenly

not to feel guilty over every scrap of chocolate she ate.

And after tea—they sat over it until past seven, and diners dressed for the evening were coming in—Gerry said he had heard of a very good speakeasy where the liquor



"You look absolutely goofy!" chirped Dora from the big bed they shared when Harriet got home. "You must have fallen for him like a ton of brick. Is he that hot?"



was good and the food was better. So they went there.

"Let's not attempt to do a theater to-night," said Gerry. "Let's take this evening to really get acquainted. I brought pockets full of pictures to show you. And I want to hear all about you."

So they sat side by side on a comfortable padded bench and sipped long cold drinks slowly and talked. Gerry told her all about his last year in the bush, and that when he went back he was going to be manager in charge of all the oil fields in Venezuela, and he was going to live in a house in Maracaibo, since the oil fields were principally around the great Lake Maracaibo. He had made all arrangements for the house before he came away and he even had a picture of it. A lovely white plaster house with a great stone paved patio surrounded by palm trees and strange shrubbery, and centering about a fountain.

Immediately Harriet was imagining herself mistress of that lovely home, serving tea in the lovely patio to Gerry and his friends.

"But first I've got to go to Europe and get a lot of things straightened out," he concluded.

"O-oh!" It was a disappointed little sound that she couldn't stop. "When?"

"In about ten days," he said. "But I'll stop here on my way back to South America, and if I give you warning, will you save every evening for me while I'm in town?"

"Oh, of course!" said Harriet, in a tone that said that went without saying. "But I'm disappointed you're leaving so soon!"

"Are you really?" he asked with a pleased smile.

"It's the strangest thing," said Harriet dreamily. "We really aren't strangers, at all. I feel as if I'd

known you always. As if all this were foreordained."

"So do I," said Gerry, leaning back comfortably, and thinking out loud. "Think how marvelous it would be if you lived in Maracaibo. Think of the fun we could have. Golf, tennis, swimming, sundown parties, dances. There isn't a girl like you in the whole town."

Two minds with two entirely different thoughts. Harriet thought he was getting ready to propose to her. Gerry was a million miles away from any thought of marriage.

"Well, invite me," said Harriet, breathlessly, happily.

"You're invited. Listen: I'll be back from Europe in July. Why don't you and your sister take a vacation in September and come down on a cruise. That gives me time to get the house ready to entertain. You'll love that house, Harriet, and it will make a perfect background for your generous beauty."

He was thinking of its spacious rooms and high ceilings, in comparison to the crowded small rooms of her apartment.

"Oh, Gerry darling!" she breathed, eyes closed for a moment of prayer of thankfulness. "And we can be married in that patio! It's a perfect place for a wedding!"

And then, because she was so happy she wanted to cry, she leaned her head against his arm for a moment. She could have cried a second later, for right in the midst of that, Gerry signaled to a waiter.

"Drink up," he ordered gruffly. They had two more pretty fast after that, and there was a blurred spell when Harriet couldn't remember exactly what was said. But she remembered perfectly that Gerry kissed her all the way home in the taxi. And she burst in on Dora with



the dramatic statement that Gerry had asked her to marry him.

"Well! Congratulations!" said Dora. "Are you sure?"

"Of course!" said Harriet. "He said you and I should take our vacations in September and take a boat trip down there. I'm going to be married in the lovely patio of his house and you can be bridesmaid. We'd have been married in July when he comes back from Europe, only he wants to get the house ready for me. You know, buy furniture and all that."

"I should think you'd want to buy your own furniture," said Dora practically. "You can't trust a man's taste."

"Gerry wants it that way," said Harriet dreamily.

"I suppose you'll be seeing him every night until he sails, after this," said Dora with a yawn.

"Oh, of course," said Harriet, remembering suddenly that he hadn't said anything about plans for tomorrow night. Well, he would call her.

But he didn't call her. All the next day she waited for his call, and all that evening she sat, white and worried, beside the telephone. What had happened? Had there been an accident? Was he hurt somewhere? She couldn't think of any other reason why he hadn't called. And she spent another sleepless night worrying over that.

The next day, she spent all her spare time at the office calling hotels and asking if Gerry Eberhard was registered. She actually had been so goofy over him that she hadn't noticed what hotel it was he had taken her to, the night she waited in the lobby for him to dress! At last she located him, but he was out. Every hour after that, and every half hour all evening, she called him.

At one thirty his sleepy voice answered:

"Gerry, darling! What happened? I've been worried almost to death!"

"Who is it?" he asked, stalling for time.

"Harriet."

"Oh! Didn't you get my note?"

"No! What did you write?" she asked. "Oh, darling! I'm so relieved to hear your voice!"

"I got caught in a jam of appointments," he said. "The chief figures he's got to entertain me, and I'm sorry, Harriet, but he's got me booked solid almost every minute I'm in town. It's a shame, but you'll just have to let me call you when I'm free. You'll do that, won't you?"

"Of course," she said, trying to keep her awful disappointment out of her voice. "But tell me you love me!"

"My dear girl! Think of the telephone operators!" came his voice, in such a shocked tone that she laughed.

"Oh, all right," she said. "But do call me occasionally, and be sure you tell me what ship you're sailing on. I want to send you a bon voyage letter, and see you off, of course."

"I'll call you. Good night."

Harriet folded her arms and laid them across the telephone and then laid her face on them, trying not to think.

He was tired, poor boy, and no wonder. Maybe she had awakened him. It was one thirty. But then he wasn't in his room at one, for she had called then. Even so, she couldn't understand. He had asked her to marry him, hadn't he? And a man oughtn't to act that way with the girl he has just asked to marry him.

Over and over it she went. If only she hadn't taken those last two



drinks he had almost forced upon her that night! She wasn't used to drinking and everything except Gerry's kisses in the taxi was a muddled blur. Still, he *had* asked her to marry him!

She remembered asking him if they couldn't be married in July, when he came back to New York from Europe, so her father and mother could come on from the West to see her married. And he said "No," that it would take all the glamour out of any honeymoon for a man to marry a girl and then sail away and leave her.

In his hotel room, Gerry Eberhard stood staring at the telephone as if it were liable to jump up off the table and bite him. By the time Harriet was in bed, he was packed, checked out and installed at another hotel. And the new hotel had instructions not to put his name on the public register, and to put no telephone calls through unless the caller asked for his room both by name and number. Gerry Eberhard was a scared young man!

Harriet finally got to sleep by convincing herself that Gerry was telling her the truth. He *had* come to New York on business and, of course, business came first. She would trust him because he loved her. She was sure he loved her. Every word, every glance, those two times they were together had told her that he was as much in love with her as she was with him.

But she found herself with plenty of questions to answer.

"What happened to Gerry?" demanded Dora at breakfast.

"He's all tied up with appointments," said Harriet.

"Yeah? What did you do to scare him off?" asked Dora.

And Harriet burst into tears for answer. It was bad enough to be

sure something was wrong, without having shrewd Dora guess it so easily.

At the office it was worse, for Harriet had told every one who came near her that she was going to marry the grandest man in the world and live in a beautiful house in Maracaibo. And to-day she just couldn't manage to look like a newly engaged girl simply dazzled by her new happiness.

"He's leaving for Europe unexpectedly," she admitted mournfully to people who asked what was the matter. The wise ones grinned behind her back. Imagine Harriet grabbing off the grandest man in the world!

Day after day passed and no word came from him. She found out when she telephoned that he had left his hotel, but she couldn't find out where he had gone. Even the telephone operator of the New York office of the oil company he worked for wouldn't tell her. There wasn't anything to do but write him a letter and send it to that office to be forwarded. And she did that, asking what was the matter and why he didn't get in touch with her.

"I won't let him go!" she vowed, bewildered, hurt until she could hardly bear it, heartbroken at Gerry's incomprehensible behavior.

The only thing she could figure out was that something had been said between the time he proposed to her and the time they reached her door, while she was all blurry from those two drinks he had almost forced her to drink. But he *had* kissed her in the taxi! Harriet hadn't any idea that it was she who flung herself into his arms and kissed him all the way home.

Days and days of the anguish of heartbreak, hurt pride and dignity trailing in the dust passed. The only



word she got from Gerry was a radiogram from his ship at sea:

SAILED UNEXPECTEDLY SOON STOP SORRY  
UNABLE TO SAY GOOD-BY

But at least that was something, and she tried to console herself with it. And she wrote to him, sending the letters to the oil company to be forwarded. Wistful, adoring letters, that cost her hours of effort.

When that radiogram came, she decided that she was worrying uselessly, that Gerry had told her the truth about how busy he was, and that it hadn't been his fault that he had been unable to see her again. So her letters made no mention of a possible misunderstanding. She told him in every variety of words she could put together how much she loved him, and what heavenly bliss the future held for her as his wife. She begged him to reconsider and marry her when he came back in July, and take her with him when he went back to Maracaibo. She wouldn't mind staying at a hotel until their house was ready. In fact, she was sure she could take a great deal of the work and worry of getting the house ready off his hands.

Every ship that sailed carried her letters to him, and from Gerry came nothing whatever after that radiogram. Day after day Harriet raced home from the office to see if there was a letter from him. And there never was. At first she was bewildered. Twenty-four hours after that night in the speakeasy she had known that something was wrong, but she couldn't imagine what it was, and she wouldn't let herself believe it was serious.

As day followed day and week followed week, and still there was no word of any sort, she almost died of heartbreak. She couldn't eat. She couldn't sleep. She could only

grieve. The most terrible thing was that she didn't know what was the matter.

What sort of a man could Gerry be to propose to a girl, kiss her until the moon and stars were whirling in a blue bowl of delight, and then never see her again, or telephone or write?

Harriet knew that she loved him. Something had happened to her soul in those two days. She had given herself to Gerry and she could never belong to herself again.

Absent-mindedly, she took in the seams of her dresses. She couldn't bear to look in a mirror these days. She was so white and haggard. So she really didn't know what had happened to her body until Dora made her get on the scales one day.

When she didn't want to get thin, she had lost pounds until her pudgy body was slimmer than Dora's. And Gerry didn't like thin girls! That was something else to worry about.

"Nothing like a good job of worrying to take the pounds off," said Dora when she saw the new weight mark on the scales. "Gerry did that for you, if he didn't do anything else. Now listen. You're letting yourself go around looking like the wrath of the gods. Cut it out. No man's worth it. You haven't had a wave since when. And you don't even remember to powder your nose half the time. Get yourself together, old thing. There are other men in the world. Thin, you aren't hard to take at all. You don't have to wear stylish stouts any more. Why not get yourself some cute clothes? Then if Gerry should come back—all right."

Harriet looked at herself then and really was shocked. She *was* a neglected-looking specimen. What if Gerry should come back and see her like that? She had to do something





"How—you've changed!" he said in a choked sort of voice. They stood staring at each other—Gerry so bronzed; Harriet, her blue eyes wistful, adoring. "You're looking marvelous," he said.

about making herself look different immediately! And she did, too.

She hustled out and got a wave, and had the beauty shop girl mix her a special powder guaranteed to stick to any nose.

When she came home she looked like a different person, and, slim and perfectly dressed, you realized that she was actually beautiful. The only thing that marred the picture was the look of suffering in the big blue eyes and the wistful droop of her mouth. But Harriet couldn't smile. She hadn't smiled for three months.



She still went on watching the mail, hoping against hope, and then at last there came a bulky envelope from Europe. Dora got home first and took it out of the mail box. She had a hunch what it was, and tore off a corner of the big envelope and peeked. Then she left it where Harriet would find it and left the apartment.

That big envelope contained all of Harriet's letters to Gerry—all but one of them unopened. And a short note from him:

How we managed to misunderstand each other so abysmally, I'm sure I don't understand, Harriet. But since you jumped to such a wrong conclusion, I'm sure you wouldn't want me to read all these letters. I only read the first page of the one I opened. Under the circumstances it seemed kindest not to read any further.

I have arranged not to go back to New York in July, because embarrassing accidents are so likely to happen, even in such a big city, and I'm sure you never want to see me again.

It was signed, "Sincerely, Gerry Eberhard."

Harriet read it and read it. Then she dropped face downward onto the bed and let the quivering spasms of tearless anguish roll over her. If she could only understand why! That need to understand had been a continual gnawing ache for three months and to-night it became so compelling that she knew she couldn't go on living and never know.

After a while she got up and went to the telephone. Caris was back in town. Maybe Caris could help her.

Not very long after that, she was in Caris's apartment, in the same chair where she had poured out her soul to Caris so many months before, and she was telling Caris all about this.

"My dear," said Caris, who was seeing the new Harriet for the first

time, "the new you can have any man she wants! If Gerry Eberhard could see you now—well! Give him about three months in Maracaibo, and then go after him. I know what you'll need in the tropics and I'll help you shop. I think you've got a good chance. But don't bungle this time. After what happened last time——"

"Do you know what happened?" Harriet cut in anxiously.

"Yes, of course," said Caris. "You thought he was proposing to you, and he thought you were twisting something he said into a proposal of marriage. So he ran."

"Oh!" Just one word, but it conveyed volumes of anguish and shame. "Was *that* it?"

"Absolutely. And there's only one possible way to land a man after a thing like that. Listen——"

That July and August two sisters took their exercises together. Harriet hardened her new slimness with a relentless determination that left her sister gasping. Harriet! To whom any sort of exertion had always been too much trouble! And she rehearsed with Caris over and over again the things she was to say to Gerry, and she smiled for the first time in five months when she waved good-by to Caris and Dora when her ship sailed for South America.

And just exactly one week after that, a slender girl in trailing white, with a wide white lace hat that shaded her face, was standing in Gerry Eberhard's stone-flagged patio in Maracaibo staring down at the plumed goldfish that frolicked in the play of the fountain.

She was standing with her back to the house, as Caris had told her to, waiting with hammering heart, for Gerry, praying desperately that she wouldn't blunder, and that Caris had told her the right thing to do.



When she heard him, she closed her eyes for one last, frantic plea, but she did not move.

"Caris! You lamb! What a surprise this is! I didn't really think your letter meant you'd—oh!"

For Harriet had turned and was smiling at him. She could smile now. Gerry was with her.

"How—you've changed!" he said in a choked sort of voice. "Won't you—sit down?"

"Thanks, Gerry," she said quite casually. And she really managed it very well, considering the way her heart was pounding. "And I'd like some iced tea, too, if you don't mind. I find I mustn't drink the stuff you strong men take for sun-downers."

They stood staring at each other—Gerry so bronzed and looking the browner by contrast to his white linens and the white helmet he had jerked off; Harriet, her great blue eyes wistful, adoring, her slender body as straight and quiet as the white parasol planted in front of her, two hands so soft and lovely.

"You're looking marvelous," he said, apparently having great difficulty with his voice.

"I'm glad you think so," she smiled. "And may I have my tea? I can stay only a moment."

"I'm sorry!" he cried, striding toward the house and calling out orders in Spanish.

"What are you doing in Maracaibo?" he asked, when they were settled in two great peacock chairs.

"I came down on a tour ship. We're only in port a day, but I wanted to straighten out that misunderstanding of ours, Gerry. It's just that I'm unaccustomed to liquor, I guess. I—wanted to tell you how ashamed I am, and thank you for behaving so perfectly. I'm endlessly grateful to you."

"You're——" began Gerry, his eyes bulging with astonishment.

"I wouldn't want my silly behavior to leave a bad memory, Gerry," she went on, smiling softly. "I can only put it down to the fact that I never drank liquor until that night in the speakeasy with you. So whatever I did, whatever I thought, must have been motivated by those highballs. And I hope you'll forgive me. Will you?"

"Why—why, of course!" stammered Gerry. But his eyes were anxious, wistful.

"I'm afraid I made you very uncomfortable," she said ruefully, marveling at how exactly Caris had charted in advance just the way Gerry would take this. "If you'd read my second letter instead of sending it back unopened, you'd have seen that I asked you if you really had proposed to me, or if I had only imagined it."

"I—why—I—— Of course I proposed to you!" When Gerry finally decided to say it, the words came out with a rush.

"Gerry!" She shook an accusing finger at him. "You've got better sense than to propose to a girl the second time you lay eyes on her. Mercy! The romantic man!"

"Well, how about the third time I lay eyes on you?" said Gerry, getting out of his chair and coming across to catch her two hands and pull her toward him.

"Hm-m-m," she hedged. "That wouldn't be much better, would it? You couldn't be sure you meant it. And, anyway, I've been drinking iced tea to-day, and I wouldn't be so likely to drape myself around your neck. Wasn't I silly?"

"No!" said Gerry forcefully, tightly holding both her hands in one of his and sliding his free arm about her. "But if you call it silli-





*"Harriet, won't you marry me? Won't you stay here with me? Say you will." Caris had told her to say "No" at first. But Harriet couldn't bear to.*

ness, I wish you'd be silly again. Look about you, Harriet. Isn't this patio the perfect place for a wedding? Look. There's even a little

old altar there beneath that blossoming vine."

Harriet, with both Gerry's arms about her now, turned her head to



look, and when she turned it back, Gerry's lips were waiting in exactly the right spot.

"Gerry!" she reproved him, but she kept her eyes downcast so that he couldn't see the dancing light of happiness in them. "Is that nice?"

"Perfect!" said Gerry. "Harriet, won't you marry me? Won't you stay here with me? Say you will."

Caris had told her to say "No" at first. "Tell that man he can't have something, and he'll move heaven and earth to get it," Caris had insisted.

But Harriet couldn't bear to.

"Here I go around your neck again," she said, holding up her lips to be kissed.

And presently they were rushing down to the ship to get her baggage off, and not very long after that, just as the huge tropical moon was

coming up over the trees, there was a wedding in that lovely patio; a wedding that was dreamlike in its ethereal beauty with the night birds singing and the night-blooming flowers of the tropics opening to send forth their luscious perfume.

And Harriet and Gerry have never again mentioned that interlude between the night in the speakeasy and the wedding in the patio. Gerry wouldn't for the world have his wife know in what a panic he had run from her. And neither would Harriet have him know that the real reason she came to Maracaibo was not to apologize for her go-getter tactics, but to apply some more of the same.

It doesn't matter, anyway, for life began for the two of them with that moon-blessed wedding under a blue-black tropical sky.



### REMEMBERING

I'LL remember you when the raindrops fall  
 Like tears upon my face—that's not all;  
 I'll remember you when the new moon beams  
 And brings back to me a hundred dreams.  
 I'll remember you when the first bright star  
 Blooms in the sky—to you afar  
 I'll come in a golden shimmering mist,  
 Lay on your lips the lips you've kissed;  
 Stir in your heart love's memories true;  
 Bring back the happy hours we knew;  
 Call to you with a love call clear,  
 Till you answer and remember, dear.

HELEN K. ROBERTS.





**T**HE country club was packed. Light streamed through the windows opening on the long, low-railed veranda. The orchestra was playing the latest fox trot, hauntingly poignant in its broken-hearted, rhythmic melody.

In the dark shadows of the bitter-sweet that draped its scarlet berries around the porch posts, Kathy stood on tiptoe, her hands on Dave Laurel's shoulders. Her head was thrown back to meet his gaze, and the moon lighted the earnestness of her tear-wet eyes. It shone, too, on

# Only You

By

Jessie Reynolds

the smooth fairway that stretched beyond them, turning it into a silver background for the tumbled darkness of her hair. Her cheeks were marked with tears, and there was a sound of choked-back sobs

in her husky voice as she spoke!

"Oh, it isn't only that I'm jealous, Dave! If that were all, even loving you as I do, worshiping you, I'd try not to let you see. But I'm frightened. Carol is Jack Scarlet's wife. She's beautiful! Your being seen around with her makes people talk. You're the mayor; you can't get



away from that! And Jack Scarlet and the men behind him would move heaven and earth to get you to sign that franchise! You've got to be careful! Don't let him get a hold on you!"

"Franchise!" Dave said impatiently. "All I've heard lately is talk of that franchise; the rewards I'll get if I sign, the knocks I'll get if I don't! If I'd realized that being mayor was going to let me in for all this argument, I would have refused the nomination." His hands closed over Kathy's tiny ones, held them for an instant in a grip that hurt. "Can't you forget that in the daytime you happen to be my secretary? Can't we leave business at the office? I'm not signing that franchise; it's a rank steal! I've told you that a dozen times. Neither Jack Scarlet, nor Tom Duffy, nor any of them, can make me sign it. As for Carol——" He hesitated, his eyes shifting uneasily under Kathy's honest gaze.

"Well, what about Carol?" The soft music of a woman's voice made him swing around. Little waves of dislike and fear went through Kathy. Carol Scarlet always made Kathy feel like that. With all the strength of her wholesome outdoor spirit, she resented Carol's indolently curved figure, the sleepy lure of her heavy-lidded eyes. Carol's dimpled hands with their sharp pink nails seemed strangely sinister to Kathy.

She was bitterly conscious of the tears that streaked the rouge on her cheeks, yet she was too proud to wipe them off.

"She is a cat! She can see in the dark!" Kathy thought as she looked at Carol Scarlet, heard her honeyed voice say: "Kathy, you aren't crying, are you? Davey, boy, what have you been doing to this little

secretary of yours? Surely"—watching, Kathy saw Carol's white hands flutter, until at last they rested on Dave's arm in curved security—"you aren't quarreling over me! Oh, I'm so sorry!"

"Why, I——" Dave stammered. His eyes shifted from Carol to Kathy and back again.

Burning with mortification, Kathy snapped the words from him and threw them at Carol.

"Why, Carol!" Then, as she lost all care of what she said: "Yes, we were quarreling, and you know it; and you know why! I want you to understand that even if I am Dave Laurel's secretary, I'm also the woman he loves, and who loves him, and I want you to let him alone! You make me sick, you and your 'Davey, boy'! You're a married woman!"

Kathy knew that every word she was saying was making Dave angrier and herself more ridiculous, but she couldn't stop. Carol's wide eyes were staring pathetically at Dave; her full red lips were trembling, but her hands did not leave his arm.

It seemed to Kathy that there was something menacing about those hands. It was as though they were holding, not Dave's sleeve, but his foolish, unseeing, man's soul, stifling it.

"Take your hands off his arm!" Kathy cried. "Take them off, I tell you! If he can't see through you, I can! You're sly and hateful and bad! You're trying to buy Dave's honor with that soft allure of yours! I don't know what your game is, but you're playing one—you and your husband! You——"

"Kathy!" Dave's face was flushed angrily. "Kathy, have you lost your mind? For Heaven's sake, get hold of yourself! Let go of Carol's arms. You're hurting her!"



He turned to the other woman. "Carol, let me take you inside! There's nothing I can say, nothing I can do. I can't tell you how deeply I regret this occurrence."

He was furious, Kathy realized. He hated her. He would never forgive her. She rushed after him: "Dave! Dave! I'm sorry! I didn't mean——"

But he was leading Carol away, his arm around her shoulders, his brown head bent protectingly toward her blond one. It seemed to Kathy that she never had seen anything so stern and shamed as his parting look had been.

She stood for an instant watching them go, until a tidal wave of self-reproach sent her stumbling down the veranda steps, out into the shadowy, moonlit night. She wanted to hide, wanted to get away where no one would see her, where she could cover her burning face and cry unseen.

A graveled path wound around the clubhouse, skirting the locker rooms until it reached the fairway beyond. She followed it past the locker-room door, past the first of a row of lighted windows.

It was then that she heard Dave's name, the first thing she was conscious of having heard since Dave had left her, and the only thing that could have shaken her from the numbness of shame and grief that held her. She stopped, hardly breathing, and stared about her. The voice had come from the second locker-room window. It was partly open, shaded by the bushes that fringed it. Kathy crept close, peering inside.

At a table, on which were glasses and several bottles, sat three men. They were hunched together in a confidential group—Jack Scarlet, Carol's husband; Tom Duffy, head

of the city council and an absolute political power in the State, and Tremont, president of the first national bank, a respected, sanctimonious man.

Jack was talking. Listening, Kathy forgot her shame and sorrow, forgot even that Dave hated her. There was something going on here that concerned Dave. She must hear every word of it!

"Of course, we've got to have Laurel's signature. I know that as well as you do. And if you'll stop interfering, we'll get it!" He had been drinking, and his voice was loud and boastful. Kathy caught Tremont's cautious "Sh!"

"Oh, no one will hear us in here! They're all dancing upstairs. I've got a way"—he paused, and, grinning slyly, poured himself another drink—"of keeping tabs on that guy. Leave it to me!"

"Yes, I guess you have." Duffy's voice was sharp with disapproval. "If it's what I think it is, I don't care much for it. Young Laurel is honest. I like him; so do the other men. We've got him slated for Congress from this district if he plays along with us, but——"

Jack laughed. His teeth shone against his dark face, white as a dog's. He made Kathy think of a terrier, thin and snappy and quick.

"Well, he'll play; don't you concern yourself with how I make him! I've run up against these determined guys before. They all have their weak spots. Laurel's got his, and"—his eyes narrowed shrewdly, menacingly—"I know what it is! Well, I must be going. So long!"

It was Tremont who broke the silence that followed Jack Scarlet's departure. Tremont chuckled dryly. "A great student of human nature, our friend Scarlet," he said.

"Human nature! Is that what



you call it?" Shoving back his chair, Tom Duffy rose heavily to his feet, his face flushed with disapproval. "You and your bluffing make me sick! You know what he means, and so do I! Scarlet's turned Dave Laurel over to his wife to handle; that's what he's done! You can stay in the game if you want to. I'm through!"

The night was cold with the tang of frost. Kathy was shivering uncontrollably, but she clenched her teeth against their chattering, clenched her hands into small, determined fists. She must make him realize what was really happening.

She must find Dave and tell him what she had heard, make him see that what she had told him had been the truth, not a jealous girl's imaginings.

It was chance that sent her by way of the seldom-used passage that opened off the back hall—chance and the desire to reach the dance floor unseen. Her feet made no noise on the rubber matting, and she had gone quite a distance before she saw Dave and Carol. The passageway was unlighted except for the moonlight that filtered in, but that was enough to make Kathy stop still, breathless, her hands halfway to her parted lips.

In an alcoved recess, Carol and Dave were standing together. Carol was in Dave's arms. Her blond head gleamed against the somber black of his coat, while her bare neck, arms, and shoulders shone soft and satin-smooth. She was crying with a timid helplessness that infuriated Kathy.

"Oh, I didn't want you to know I loved you—ever! But you mustn't believe those things Kathy said about me on the porch. I'll die if you do! Won't you kiss me just once, Davey, boy, to show me I'm

forgiven, to show you don't hate me?"

"Hate you! Oh, good heavens! I don't know what it is I feel for you, Carol, but whatever it is, it's driving me mad! Look up so I can look into your eyes."

Watching, stricken and shamed, Kathy saw him lean over, cup Carol's chin in the palm of his hand. Kathy knew that in a second their lips would meet. She tried to cry out: "Don't, Dave; don't! She's a vampire! She'll betray you at every turn!" But the words wouldn't come, and when they would, it was too late, for Dave's lips, crushed against Carol's, had sent her head back, till she lay, white and yielding, in his arms, and the moon, lost behind a cloud, gave way to darkness.

Kathy turned in the darkness of the passage and tiptoed back the way she had come, careful to be very still, cautioning herself: "They mustn't hear me!" There were taxis waiting outside in the drive. Kathy took the first one she saw.

After what seemed an eternity, she reached the blessed privacy of her own little apartment, and for the first time was glad of the four lonely walls that sheltered her. At least, there was no one there to see her cry. From her window she watched the stars dim and fade, watched the sky redden in the east, watched the day come, and hated it.

"I'll resign!" she told herself savagely. "I'll never go near his old office again! I'll get a job a thousand miles from here, where I'll never see Dave Laurel again! I won't go near him!"

But when it was time to dress to go to the office, she knew she had been lying to herself. She knew she wasn't going to resign at all, knew that she had never had any idea of





*"I want you to understand that even if I am Dave Laurel's secretary, I'm also the woman he loves, and who loves him, and I want you to let him alone! You're a married woman! Take your hands off his arm!"*

*Kathy cried. "Take them off, I tell you!"*

resigning, and that she would stay until Dave Laurel told her to go.

She bathed, dressed, and ate her breakfast. What a fool she had been to lose her temper last night!—

Kathy told herself. She had given Carol her chance, and Carol had known how to take it. That scene in the passage had been her own fault, Kathy realized. Well, she



wouldn't make the same mistake again.

Carol would fight for everything she got from now on, and Kathy would fight back! Kathy had no pride. She had nothing but love.

She was sitting at her desk in the office, her head bent over the work before her, when she heard Dave's footsteps. As he entered with a curt "Good morning," her cheeks turned poppy-red, and her eyes darkened with hurt. Always when they had been alone in the office Dave had kissed her good morning, had lifted her on tiptoe and held her for a second against his heart. "To start the day right, darling!" he had whispered. Well, there would be no more of that. She felt the tears smart in her eyes. "That's right, cry!" she scolded herself angrily. "Cry like a baby!"

From the closet where he had hung his coat and hat, Dave turned to face her. There were black circles under his eyes, and he tried to cover the drawn anxiety of his face with a pretense of anger.

"That was a nice trick you played on me last night, slipping out without leaving a word! You made me look like a fool! If it hadn't been for a porter who saw you ride away in that taxi, I'd probably have called out the police! At least, you could have told me where you were going. The next time you want to ditch me, please be so kind as to tell me beforehand."

Kathy listened in open-eyed amazement. Why, he was scared, blustering, trying to work himself into a rage! He did care for her! If he didn't care, he wouldn't be acting like a guilty little boy who has been caught stealing sugar cookies.

She jumped to her feet, stood facing him, her hands behind her, her pretty little face with its pert,

freckle-bridged nose and honest eyes upturned to his.

"I wasn't going to tell you this, Dave, but—I saw you and Carol in the passageway at the club last night. That was why I went home."

Dave's face flushed. "You saw us——"

She nodded. "Yes, you and Carol. I wasn't spying on you, Dave; you needn't think that. I was just looking for you because I wanted to tell you something I'd heard. I was cutting through the back way so no one would see me. Listen, Dave! You've got to listen!"

She told him what she had seen and heard through the locker-room window. "Don't you see, darling? It's just as I told you—Carol there on the porch last night. Carol really is working you. She really is trying to get around you! She really is bad and sly and deceitful! She's everything I said she was and more!" Her voice rose in protest, but she choked it back. There she went, losing her temper again, getting jealous and childish, bringing that hard look back into Dave's eyes, the angry twist to his lips.

"Women!" he threw at her. "Women! Haven't they any charity? Haven't you any, Kathy? What happened last night in the passage was my fault—and yours! You drove us there with your accusations. I was terribly sorry for her; I still am; but I didn't mean to kiss her. I'm ashamed of that. Oh, Kathy, girl!"

He put his hands on Kathy's shoulders and stared down at her with harassed, unhappy eyes.

"I love you, dear; you're part of me—the good part, the brave part," he went on. "I want to go on loving you always. But beauty like Carol's does something to a man, something you can't understand. If



only you'd stop nagging; have a little patience, a little pity!"

"Oh, darling—foolish, blind, silly darling!" With a cry of love, Kathy drew his head down to her face and rumbled the sweep of his smooth brown hair with eager fingers. "I haven't been nagging; truly I haven't, but whatever I've been doing, I'll stop. I promise you that, Dave, and I'll try to understand"—she laughed a trembly little ghost of a laugh—"even if it is hard for a woman to understand when another steals the man she loves. But you will be careful, won't you, Dave? You'll watch out? Those men are after you, just as I said."

Dave shrugged his shoulders. "Of course they're after me, but leave them to me, won't you, Kathy? And would you mind kissing and making up?"

They kissed, then stood for a moment, their arms about each other as they looked out of the window, down at the crowded street, until, with the jingle of the phone, the day began.

In the miserable, unhappy days that followed, Kathy often thought of that moment, clung to it, tried to anchor her hopes to it. For that night at the country club had been only a beginning. As the days went by, Dave became Carol's shadow, a haggard, unhappy shadow at her beck and call. Nudges, side glances, sneers never seemed to touch him. Kathy steeled herself to meet them, too, slender shoulders squared, brave eyes unflinching. She was glad of the confusion that ruled the office, glad to lose herself in it. Work, Kathy found, was an antidote for despair.

With Dave's definite refusal to sign the franchise, his open branding of it as a steal, it became almost

overnight a political issue, and his office the stamping ground of angry politicians.

Three days before the date set for the deciding council meeting, Tom Duffy stopped at Kathy's desk on his way out of Dave's private office.

"Stubborn young idiot!" he exploded. "I admire the boy, but I'd like to wring his neck! You'd think he'd want to get up in the world, wouldn't you?"

Halfway to the door he hesitated, then came back. After a stealthy glance around the momentarily empty office, he spoke to Kathy.

"Listen, girl," he mumbled. "You love him, don't you? Well," he demanded irritably, "can't you tell him to keep clear of Scarlet's wife? They're working together, those two, and there's something in the wind. Heaven knows what it is—they're careful to keep out of my way these days—but it's there."

Kathy tried not to let his warning worry her, tried not to think of it, but she couldn't help herself. The day was dull and gloomy. It was nearly five, already dusk, when the telephone rang and Carol's voice asked for Mr. Laurel. Wearily Kathy switched the call onto Dave's phone and tried not to hear through the half-opened door the low rumble of Dave's words.

She heard him hang up; then Dave was standing nervously beside her, his eyes avoiding hers.

"I'm going out for a little while," he murmured. "If any one calls, tell them I've gone for the day. You'd better run on home yourself. You look pretty tired."

He turned to go, then swung again quickly and caught her in his arms. He kissed her fiercely on her tanned cheeks, her eyelids, her sweet, trembling lips.



"I'm a cad! I'm not fit to tie your shoe laces!" Then he released her and hurried from the office. She was alone, his footsteps echoing down the corridor.

Sinking into her chair, Kathy stared at her typewriter. Outside her window, a tree brushed its bare branches against the panes, swishing them with the sigh of the wind. Love, life, everything was so hopeless. She dropped her head on her arm. The room grew darker and darker. In the fast emptying building, the noises of closing time quieted, ceased. Every one had gone home. She should have gone home, too, Kathy knew, but getting her coat and hat and closing the office seemed too much of an effort in the utter lassitude that held her. She would have liked to go to sleep and never waken, here where everything spoke of Dave, with his kisses still warm on her lips.

She did sleep; how long she didn't know. Suddenly she was awakened by the sound of a woman's voice: "Dave! Dave, darling!"

The door to Dave's private office was open as he had left it in his hurried departure, but his desk lamp was lighted now, and its rays sent long shadows creeping across the floor. Kathy brushed her hand across her eyes and straightened her shoulders. Had that cry been her own, in her sleep, perhaps? But no; as she heard the woman's voice again, in a rush of realization Kathy understood.

In the private office beyond that half-opened door were Carol and Dave. It was Carol's voice which Kathy had heard, husky, alluring, caressing. Kathy listened, her wide eyes staring through the darkness, her small hands clenched.

"Oh, my darling, don't you see?" Carol was murmuring. "My arms

around you, my face against yours! What's an old franchise compared to love? I'm offering you everything! Once you sign, Jack won't make trouble for us, I promise you. I'll go to Reno. And then there'll be Congress, the governorship for you. We'll go to the top together, you and I, Dave!"

It was not Carol's words so much as Dave's smothered answering exclamation, "Oh, Carol!" that cut into Kathy's consciousness with the keenness of sharp-edged steel. She jumped to her feet, the red anger that had swept her that night on the country-club porch possessing her once more. Furious, heedless of consequence, Kathy walked into Dave's private office.

Dave sat in his desk chair, his head in his hands, and Carol knelt beside him. Even in her rage, Kathy thought she had never seen anything so beautiful as Carol's upturned face—so beautiful or so selfish.

"Don't listen to her, Dave!" Kathy cried. "You mustn't! I was asleep in the outer office, and suddenly I woke up and heard what she said—I couldn't help it! I'm not asking you to give her up for my sake, Dave—I know I'm not as beautiful as she is. I don't blame you for loving Carol; I don't blame you for anything but forgetting your honor! If you do what she wants you to do, you'll hate yourself as long as you live! No matter what it brings you, Dave—success, Carol's love—always down in your heart you'll know you've bought your happiness, and you'll have to pay!"

She had run out of the room, caught up her hat and coat and bag, and hurried down the corridor before either Dave or Carol, staring in a blankness of surprise, could speak or move.



Kathy was at home, curled like a miserably forlorn little kitten in the one deep-cushioned chair the apartment possessed, when Dave found her. His face was haggard and drawn as he walked into the room.

"It's all over with Carol," he said. "I've come back to you, Kathy." He knelt beside her, took her in his arms, kissed her tenderly.

It was long after midnight when he left.

"You know what you've let yourself in for, sweetheart," he said. "You're going to be the wife of a poor, struggling lawyer. The day after to-morrow, when that franchise comes up and I refuse to sign it, I'll be through politically as far as Duffy and his crowd are concerned. It will be an uphill fight, but we'll fight it together, little soldier!"

"Here!" He kissed the palm of her hand. "That's my honor." He folded her fingers over it one by one. "Hold it close, sweetheart; hold it close for me always!"

Dave spent the next day out of town on business. Kathy found his note on her desk.

I expect to get back early in the evening. Wait for me, honey; we'll have dinner together.

It was a busy day, a wild day, but Kathy loved it. Her fingers flew over the typewriter keys. The ringing of the telephone was like the call of battle to her ears. "We'll fight it together!" Dave had said, and had given her his honor to keep. He loved her!

Jack Scarlet, coming into the office late that afternoon, received the news of Dave's absence with a sneer.

"Out of the firing zone, is he?" Then he grinned down at Kathy, his mask off at last.

"You think you pulled a fast one last night, don't you? Oh, I know all about it. Listen, baby: I was framing saps like Laurel long before you were born! To-morrow morning at half past ten that council convenes, and little Davey will walk up and put his signature right where it belongs, and you'll be there to see him. I'm telling you!"

Kathy tried not to worry, but despite herself, she was frightened. She wished uneasily that Dave were there, where she could see him and talk to him. Fear mocked her from the quick-gathering shadows of the winter afternoon. As she walked home at five o'clock, it peered at her from around quickly turned corners, giped at her with the honk of each passing car.

Oh, well, Kathy assured herself, Dave would be calling for her soon, and when he did, she would tell him how silly she had been, and he would laugh away her fears and hold her close in his arms.

She heard the telephone in her apartment ringing when she was still halfway down the hall. Dave had gotten back and was telephoning her, Kathy told herself excitedly as she fumbled for her key.

But when she answered, it was long distance.

"This is Duffy, Kathy," she heard over the wire. "Listen! Get what I'm telling, and get it fast! I'm out here twenty miles from town with a broken-down car. Heaven knows when I'll get in. I got this news from a friend of Scarlet's less than an hour ago, and thought I could get home in time, but I can't. They're framing Dave to-night—Scarlet and his wife. . . . No, let me talk. They're going to black-mail him into signing that franchise to-morrow morning. I can't tell you how—I've told you too much al-



ready—but find Dave. Keep him with you. Don't let him out of your sight. I'm telling you what to do; it's up to you now!"

He hung up. Kathy jangled the hook frantically. In a wild call for central, she stopped herself and sat still for a moment. "I must get hold of myself! I mustn't get panicky! I must think!"

Duffy had told her to find Dave, keep him with her. That was what she must do.

She telephoned his hotel and spoke to Aggie, the switchboard operator whose desk faced the lobby. "Aggie, this is Kathy Harris, Mr. Laurel's secretary. Find out if he's in his room—quickly!" Tapping her fingers against her chair, Kathy



"Kathy, the angels must have sent you!" Dave said fervently. "Can't you get me loose? She's choking me! And her clothes, Kathy—they're half off! She did it on purpose as soon as she heard her husband coming!" Kathy's angry hands pulled Carol's arms from Dave's neck.



waited. "No? . . . All right; listen to me. This is terribly important, Aggie. You watch that lobby, and the minute he comes in, tell him to call me at once before he does another thing."

At six Kathy was listening with strained intentness for the telephone to ring. At half past six she was walking up and down the room. At seven she anxiously telephoned Aggie.

"But he hasn't come in yet, Miss Harris. I'm doing just as you said; watching everything."

Then, when Kathy was certain she couldn't stand the suspense another second, Aggie telephoned her.

"Is that you, Miss Harris?" Aggie asked, her voice shrill with excitement. "Something's up! The mayor came in less than five minutes ago by the back way. He took the employees' elevator up. The bell boy told me, and I was just calling Mr. Laurel to give him your message when another call came through for him. I thought it was you and gave it to him. It was Mrs. Scarlet, Jack Scarlet's wife. Heaven knows what's happened! She sounded as if she were crying, and she said her husband had beat her up and was coming back to kill her—said it was Mr. Laurel's fault, and he'd have to come and help her! She told him that if he didn't come, she'd have to get the police, and it would be all over town. Mr. Laurel hurried out of the hotel like mad. I called to him, but he wouldn't stop. . . . Say, are you getting this?"

But Kathy had hung up, rushed from the apartment, snatching up her coat and hat and bag.

Dave was going to Carol! He would be with her in the Scarlet apartment alone! Jack would find him there, would accuse him of anything, everything! This was the way

Carol and Jack Scarlet were going to frame Dave into signing the franchise.

Well, she'd be there, too!—Kathy told herself defiantly. Whatever there was to meet, she and Dave would meet it side by side.

When she reached the street, she could not find a taxi. As quickly as she could, Kathy walked the six long blocks to the Scarlets' apartment. If she could only get there before Dave in time to warn him!

At last she reached the apartment house. It loomed above her, tall and ghostly in the darkness, its lighted windows staring at her. Kathy's heart sank as she saw Dave's car parked at the curb. She was too late to warn him.

Stopping for an instant in the shadow of the entrance, trying wildly to plan her next move, Kathy saw another car drive up and come to a halt almost before her. Shrink- ing back out of sight, she watched, hardly daring to breathe, as Jack Scarlet and Tremont stepped out. She could hear every word Jack Scarlet said, even though he spoke in low tones.

"Come on, now. All set? Take it easy, Tremont. There's no use rushing things. Laurel just got here; we have plenty of time. Let's wait in the lobby for a second or two." He chuckled. "This isn't anything so crude as blackmail, Tremont; this is going to be the real thing. The injured husband coming on his wife in another man's arms! Give them time!"

Kathy stared about her, trapped, wild. What if she stepped out of the shadows and faced those two men—how would that help Dave? She would be just another witness to the fact that he was in the Scarlet apartment alone with Carol! No; there was only one way Kathy could



save Dave—by reaching the Scarlet apartment before Jack and Tremont did, by being there at Dave's side when they arrived, ready with a story that would be as shrewd and plausible as their own.

Suddenly she remembered the fire escape in the court at the rear. Once, when the Scarlets had first come to town and every one had been rushing them, Kathy had gone up to their apartment that way with a crowd on a surprise party. Carol's carelessness in leaving the fire-escape window unlocked had amused them all.

Suppose it were unlocked now! Kathy ran back to the entrance to the deserted court, hurried over to the fire escape, and began to mount the steps, her small feet making no noise, even her breathing stilled. Three floors up, she stopped, and quietly tried the window, her very touch a prayer. It was unlocked! Kathy opened it and crawled through, a dark little shadow, into the shadows of the room beyond.

This was the kitchen, with its tiny alcoved dinette. Kathy caught a glimpse of the dimly lighted living room, with Carol's white-paneled bedroom opening off it. For the fraction of a second that Kathy hesitated, she heard Carol's voice raised in hysterical pleading.

"Dave, how can you be so cruel as to stand there and not even try to help me! Come here beside my bed. Your arms, Dave! I'm going to faint! Jack beat me, I tell you! See—look at my shoulders!"

There was the sound of running feet in the corridor. The door of the apartment burst open. Carol gasped. "Oh, there he is now! There's Jack! He'll find you here. Oh, Dave, what can we do?"

Suddenly the apartment was a madhouse of noise. Jack rushed

into Carol's room. He was a good actor. The walls echoed with his furious words as he faced Dave.

"You hypocrite! You cad! Get out of my way, Tremont! How long has this been going on, Laurel? You and my wife—I can't believe it! I promise you I'll see that you're publicly disgraced on the front page of every paper in the State! I'll tell——"

Carol screamed, reaching out to Dave with her bare white arms. "Oh, don't let him disgrace me, Dave! Do anything he wants—anything—for my sake, Dave!"

It was into this excitement that Kathy rushed, pushing Tremont out of the way, thrusting Jack aside as though he had been a piece of wood, until she reached Dave. His face was so filled with shock and shame that there was no room left in it for surprise. Half on his knees, he strained awkwardly to free himself from Carol's clinging arms, while he stared sidewise up at Kathy. He seemed completely unconcerned with Jack's ravings.

"Kathy, the angels must have sent you!" Dave said fervently. "Can't you get me loose?" he groaned. "She's choking me! And her clothes, Kathy—they're half off! She did it on purpose as soon as she heard her husband coming! Good heavens, what a mess!"

Kathy's angry hands pulled Carol's arms from about Dave's neck. Kathy's eyes kept furious guard as Dave staggered to his feet. His arm went around her shoulders in a natural, instinctive gesture. His helplessness and utter panic quieted Kathy's nerves as nothing else could have done. She calmly faced Jack, confident that her presence in the apartment had completely frustrated his plans.

She had started to speak when a



noise from the living room caught her attention. The next instant Tom Duffy entered the bedroom, searching her out with a glance of anxious questioning.

She stopped long enough to nod reassuringly, while her fingers nestled warmly in Dave's hand.

"I must say Jack isn't very grateful, is he, Dave?" she smiled. "Here his wife has this awful fainting spell, and you and I take care of her, giving up a perfectly good dinner date to do it, yet he comes yelling around like this! I'm through playing the good Samaritan, if that's all the thanks we get. Let's go. I guess we've done all we can."

From Tom Duffy came a gasp that grew into a chuckle, then a shout of laughter. Pushing his way to their side, he slapped Dave on the back, then took the silent Tremont by the elbow and swung him into line.

"You certainly have done all you can," Duffy laughed. "Come on, Tremont; let's go with them!" He turned, suddenly serious, to Jack Scarlet. "That franchise deal is off, Scarlet! You and your wife had better leave for the East to-morrow. Things are liable to be a little uncomfortable if you stay around here."

Out in the corridor, Kathy caught Duffy's arm and pulled him back with Dave and herself. Tremont, plodding on ahead, shamed and sullen, could not hear what she said.

"Dave, it was Mr. Duffy who called me to-night, who told me what was going on," she explained. "How will we ever thank him, Dave?"

Duffy shook his head. "You'll thank me by forgetting it," he said. "Can't a hard-boiled politician have his weak moments now and then? After all, it was you, Kathy, who

turned the trick. Even if I had been on time, I couldn't have done anything alone."

Out on the street, the soft darkness about them, the stars winking at them from behind scurrying clouds, Tom Duffy left them. He stood for a moment talking to Dave and Kathy before he followed the still silent Tremont into the car parked at the curb.

"Tremont seems fed up with the sort of frame-up we witnessed to-night. Got his stomach full, hasn't he?" He nodded with back-flung thumb. "Well, so have I, but at least I've found one honest man, and I'm going to hang onto him! Congressman"—he bowed ceremoniously to Dave—"let me congratulate you. You'll go far, and you've got a mighty smart young woman to help you! I hope you enjoy that date of yours to-night."

"Date!" Dave echoed after Duffy had driven off. "The only date I'm interested in to-night is a date with a minister—and you, Kathy, darling."

He raised Kathy's radiant face to his, and their lips met and clung. It was to both of them as though they had never kissed before. All the miracle, the splendor, the rapture of love lay in that embrace.

"You're the one I love," Dave murmured softly against her lips. "I've loved you, only you, from the beginning, dear. Anything between Carol and me was just a mirage, an illusion. There's going to be only one girl in my heart from now on—and that girl, Kathy Harris, is going to be you, my precious!"

Kathy looked at him for a deep, pulsating moment; then she was in his arms again, held close to his heart, giving him kiss for kiss in the way of a woman who has found the only man.





# Professional Lover

## CHAPTER XV.

By

Jennifer Ames

*A Serial*

Part VII.

**S**TARR'S low voice finally broke the dead stillness which filled the room:

"Don't you see, Rex, that that is the chief reason why I can't play opposite you?" She wished he'd understand.

"No, I'm darned if I do!" He shot it out in sharp exasperation.

"There's Stephen," she said.

"What right has he to you? He isn't even divorced yet!"

"But we're going to be married as soon as he is."

"Then he's no right to try to tie

you down until then. It's darned selfish. And, I do not care what you say, this absurd stand he's taking about trying to stop your making a hit in pictures is pure selfishness, too!"

You're always most angry when you realize there's some justification in what the other person is saying. Starr was furious and did not hide her anger.

"How dare you criticize Stephen? And it isn't his wish. It's mine. I don't want to play opposite you in this or any other picture, so there!"



"Well"—Rex thrust his hands into his pockets and his chin protruded aggressively—"if you're going to be stubborn I can be stubborn, too. Unless you play opposite me in this picture I won't play in it either. I refuse to play with any other leading lady. If you won't accept Hammond's offer he'll have to find some other male star for 'Lovable Rake.'"

For the moment Starr's chief sensation was amazement. "You're joking, of course."

He gripped her elbows and swung her around to face him.

"Do I look as though I were joking?" he demanded belligerently.

Starr was forced to admit that he didn't.

"But it's absurd," she protested breathlessly.

"No more absurd than your refusing to play the lead because of a selfish whim on Stephen's part!"

"You can't force me to play it."

"No, and they can't force me to play it, either."

"But there's your contract, Rex. If you walk out on them it will be automatically broken."

"Well, let it be broken."

"But, but your career?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Why worry about a career? I can be as stubborn as you, on occasion, Starr."

"You couldn't be so mad, Rex, as to walk out on them!"

"Couldn't I?"

And Starr realized suddenly with a queer sharp anxiety that he might be.

All the same, she wasn't going to give in to him. Nothing would induce her to give in to him. It would upset Stephen frightfully. And if Rex chose to wreck his career over this ridiculous stand that was his own affair, wasn't it? Her

first, second and last duty was to Stephen. Stephen whom she loved, whom she was going to marry.

They continued to quarrel. It ended in Rex picking up his hat savagely and marching out of the room.

"He'll think better of it in the morning," Starr tried to console herself. "And, of course, it's all nonsense about his threatening to walk out on them. Why, they'd be so mad with him at the studio it would ruin him."

She tried to think this didn't matter to her. Yet all the time she knew in an annoying, nagging way it did matter. And that made her all the more determined to stand by her decision.

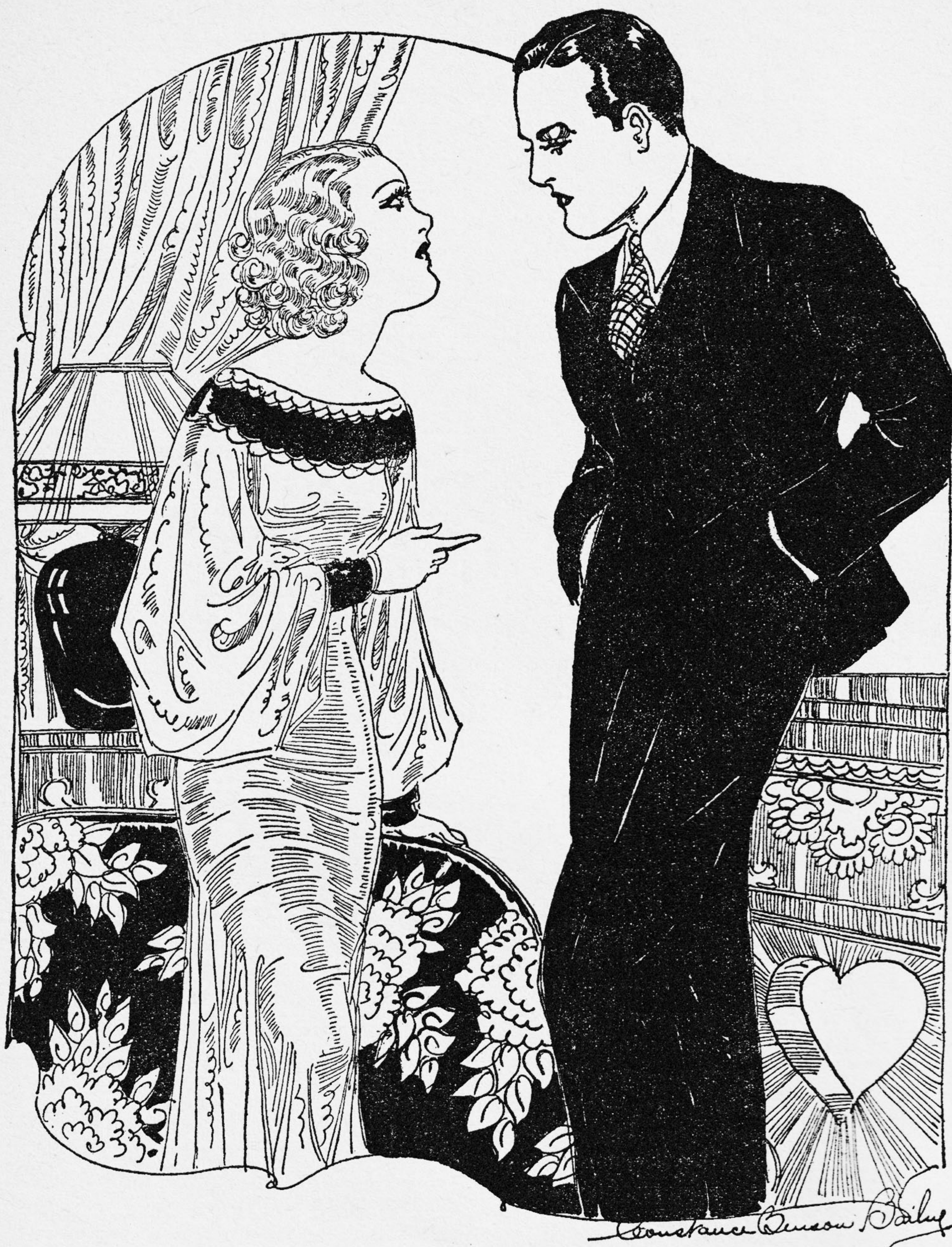
She didn't mention the interview to Stephen. Oddly she felt she didn't want to talk about Rex to Stephen. They dined together and went to the theater, but Starr found the whole evening curiously flat. She continually had to whip up her enthusiasm. And when Stephen kissed her good night she felt queerly stifled.

The next day when she met him for lunch he seemed in abnormally good spirits. "There's a grand row going on at the studio," he told her, chuckling. "I think Rex has certainly queered himself this time. Al won't get over it in a hurry, believe me!"

"Why, what's happened?" Starr asked sharply. It was strange how tense she felt suddenly. And there was a cold sense of fear gripping her heart.

"Rex has got too big for his boots, obviously. But then I told you so the other day, didn't I? That's the worst of these stars. They get good, then right away they think they can rule the whole roost. Rex calmly announced this morning that





*Starr was furious. "How dare you criticize Stephen? And it isn't his wish. It's mine. I don't want to play opposite you in this or any other picture, so there!"*

he wasn't going to play in 'Lovable Rake'! After it had all been arranged that he should, too! I've never seen Al so mad. He stormed

about that studio as though forty demons were perched on his shoulder. Swore that unless Rex came off his high horse and played in the



picture he'd tear up his contract, and see that he didn't get a contract from any other studio either." Stephen laughed with grim satisfaction. "He'll stick to his word, too. I know the old boy. He's given Rex until this afternoon to decide. And I'm willing to bet a thousand dollars that unless Rex capitulates, his career as a star is as good as over."

Starr was sitting stiff and straight in her chair.

"You mean that?" she muttered. "You really think it would ruin him?"

"Not a doubt about it." Stephen grinned. "In a couple of years no one would even remember the name of Rex Brandon."

There was a long pause. Starr was staring down at her plate, but she didn't see anything that was on it. Her hands were clenched tightly about the sides of her chair.

"You say he's got until this afternoon to decide?" she whispered at last.

Stephen nodded absent-mindedly. He consulted his wrist watch.

"We'd better hurry, Starr. You know we're going to that preview of the Camedon picture. It starts at two thirty."

"I'm afraid I won't be able to go with you, Stephen," Starr said breathlessly. "I've got an important engagement. I'm awfully sorry, but I must rush."

And, before Stephen's startled and amazed eyes, she grabbed up her bag and gloves and literally ran out of the restaurant.

When Starr left the restaurant she had no clear idea what she intended doing. Perhaps she merely wanted to get away from Stephen; perhaps, too, it was pure coincidence that led her to Rex's apartment.

But whatever motive guided her steps she arrived in a curiously breathless state. But Mr. Brandon hadn't returned for lunch and his servant believed him to be still out at the studio.

Still with no definite course of action admitted even to herself, Starr hailed a taxi and was driven out to the West Studio. She knew, as she drew near the place, that she had to see Rex. But just what she would say to him she hadn't the least idea.

But Rex wasn't at the studio. Urged on by Starr the page boy searched and searched. Later she gleaned that he had been seen driving away in his big blue car shortly before lunch. No one seemed to know whether or not he intended returning.

But, of course, he would return. Starr was convinced of that at three o'clock; less convinced at four; and in a state of awful doubt and uncertainty at five. Somehow she had passed the intervening hours. She had a vague notion that she had wandered from one set to another. Only two pictures were being made in the studio just then, the main set being held in reserve for the beginning of "Lovable Rake."

At five thirty, somehow, she found herself in the anteroom of Al Hammond's office demanding to see him.

"Have you an appointment?" the girl asked doubtfully.

"No, but tell him I must see him. It's about Mr. Brandon and it is very important," Starr replied.

The girl looked surprised but hurried into Hammond's private office.

She returned with the message that Mr. Hammond had heard too much both from and about Mr. Brandon that day. If Mr. Brandon wished to see him himself he could



do so. But he'd better hurry because only half an hour remained till six o'clock. And after six o'clock there would be nothing at all Mr. Hammond would wish to hear from Mr. Brandon.

"Why, they're fighting just like a lot of stupid women!" Starr cried in despair. "I didn't think men could be so petty!"

"Gosh! And you were once a secretary yourself!" the girl murmured incredulously.

Starr said very determinedly. "I must see Mr. Hammond. I shall sit out here and wait for him, that's all."

The girl handed her a movie magazine. "Suit yourself," she said.

Starr didn't read the magazine. She didn't even open it. She sat on the edge of the seat and watched the private door that led from Hammond's office more intently than any wild beast ever watched its prey. There was a curious taut suggestion about her body, too, as though she were waiting to spring.

And she did, the moment Hammond appeared.

She rushed toward him and literally clutched him.

"Oh, Mr. Hammond," she cried, "I must talk to you. Please let me talk to you. I know you're busy but I must talk to you."

"It seems you are talking to me, doesn't it?" Hammond smiled slightly. Not over-cordially, but the fact that he did smile helped and gave Starr the courage to go on and ask for a few seconds of his time.

"Can't I come back with you into your office just for a minute?"

"A woman's minute is usually an hour," he grumbled.

"But I swear mine won't be."

His smile broadened. "I don't believe you, but come along."

He stood by his big mahogany desk and said:

"Well?"

And, suddenly, Starr couldn't think what she had come to say to him.

"Well?" he repeated. This time more sharply.

"It's about—Rex Brandon," she stammered.

"Sent you as a little peacemaker, did he? Too darn proud to give in gracefully himself." There was something faintly approaching a sneer on the little man's face.

"Oh, no," Starr cried hastily. "He doesn't know anything about my being here."

"In that case what's the sense in wasting my time?" he asked gruffly.

"But I feel sure I could persuade him to be reasonable. If you'd only give me time!"

"Why should any one have to persuade Rex Brandon to act in one of my pictures?" he asked roughly.

"It isn't that," she said hastily. "It's all so involved, Mr. Hammond."

He sat down with a sigh. He saw he was in for it.

"Seems to me it *is* involved," he said with a grim laugh. "A queer business. First I make you an offer to play opposite Rex—an amazing offer considering your inexperience—and you turn it down! No reason given either. Next Rex calmly declares he isn't going to play in the picture. Still no reason given! And he's under contract. Of course, that cancels his contract, but I'm fond of the fellow so I stooped to argue with him. Even offered him until this afternoon to think it over. And, far from being grateful, he runs away from the studio and doesn't return. And now you come here—though I haven't a ghost of a notion what you have come for."



Starr repeated what she had said before. If only he'd give Rex more time to reach a decision.

"And why should you think you can persuade him?" he demanded irritably. "He's not in love with you, is he?" He raised gray, bushy eyebrows and shot out the question.

Starr colored. She stammered, "I don't know—he——"

"Is he or isn't he?" the little man demanded. "You're a girl. You should know."

"Well, perhaps he is," Starr admitted.

Hammond sighed and relaxed. "That changes the situation. You must expect a man in love to behave like a lunatic!"

Starr, too, breathed more freely. That is, until Hammond asked his next question.

"Are you in love with him?"

"No, oh, no."

The little man breathed something under his breath. It sounded suspiciously like "liar."

Aloud he asked: "Is that why you refused to play opposite him?"

"Yes. Well, not altogether. You see I promised Stephen—Stephen Desmond——"

An oath escaped Hammond. "And how does Stephen Desmond come into all this? As if it wasn't complicated enough already. What's he sticking his fingers into this for?"

"Stephen doesn't want me to have a career."

"Oh, he doesn't, does he?" His voice was almost a snarl.

Suddenly Starr felt she had to know something.

"Mr. Hammond"—her voice was tentative—"why isn't Stephen directing your new picture?"

"Why in Heaven's name should he?"

"But he's directed most of Rex's pictures."

"Yes, and nearly made a flop of the last two. If it hadn't been for Rex's genius they would have flopped. I wanted to take the last one away from him, but Rex wouldn't hear of it. Begged me to give Stephen another chance. Well, I gave it to him and look at the mess he's made of things. I've had complaints from the entire cast."

"Did Rex complain?"

"He was the only one who didn't! But he should have! Stephen managed to queer his acting in almost every scene. You see," he explained a moment later as he lit a fresh cigar, "for the past year or so Stephen's been simply swollen with conceit. His early successes must have gone to his head. Lately, he hasn't been able to take a hint or a suggestion from any one. It's about as much as my life is worth to put up an idea to him. I thought if I put him on two shorts for a time he might get his sense back. Because I believe he has talent. Only talent and conceit don't mix, you know."

Starr didn't say anything for a minute. She was staring out of the window and there was a far-away look in her eyes. Curiously she found she couldn't resent what Hammond had just said to her. Perhaps for some time past in her secret heart she had known it. Only that strong streak of stubbornness in her had refused to let her admit it. No, instead of feeling enraged she only felt tired. And strangely detached. As though she stood watching something that had been very precious pass out of her life. She might have tried to recapture it. But she hadn't the strength. Neither did she feel she wanted to very much.

"The point is," continued Hammond, "leaving Rex out of it en-





tirely, are you prepared to reconsider your decision not to play in the picture? Luckily, you've still time. I've got some girls lined up for tests to-morrow but"—he winked broadly—"the tests needn't come out so good, they can be terrible, if you say the word."

"May I tell you to-morrow morning?" Starr asked quietly.

"No!" he ejaculated irritably. "I've been put off enough to-day as it is. You tell me now, young lady, and hurry up about it."

Starr drew a deep breath. She felt curiously as though she were on the end of a diving board, her arms and head pointed downward, ready to take the plunge. Should she? A curious dizziness crept over her.





"I'm afraid I won't be able to go with you, Stephen," Starr said breathlessly. "I've got an important engagement. I'm awfully sorry, but I must rush." And, before Stephen's startled and amazed eyes, she grabbed up her bag and gloves and ran out of the restaurant.

On one hand was Stephen, her promise to him, but she knew now that for some time past she had ceased to love him. On the other hand was



a career, possible fame and—but her mind closed down abruptly.

She drew a deep breath. "Yes, Mr. Hammond, if you still want me?"

"That's a sensible girl!"

"And Rex?" she asked quickly. "You will give him more time to reconsider?"

Having gained a victory, Hammond was inclined to be magnanimous.

"He can have until midnight," he told her. He banged his desk sharply and added: "But not another moment, and that's final. Either he telephones me or comes over to the house before twelve or else he can go to blazes as far as I'm concerned. Understand me?"

Starr said that she did.

Starr felt like an entirely different being as, a few minutes later, she was driven away from the studio. She knew she was on the threshold of a new life. She felt that, within the last half hour, she had been shorn of a lot of worn-out beliefs and ideas. It was funny how your beliefs and ideas did get worn out, and that it needed a sharp shock to make you realize it. And your affections? A little shiver ran through her. It hurt to realize that those too, could become worn out. It made her feel sad and a little desperate. She had always thought that once she fell in love she would never change.

She thought: "I've got to have it out with Stephen this afternoon." It wasn't in Starr's nature to evade or put things off.

Stephen was at home and he opened the door to her himself. She looked at him, almost as though seeing him for the first time. And when he tried to kiss her she moved sharply away from him.

He led her into the sitting room. "Awfully sorry I won't be able to go out to-night, Starr," he said. "But I'm expecting a cable from England. Some time ago a big film corporation there made me an excellent offer. I didn't accept then, but I didn't definitely turn it down either. Well, after lunch, I cabled that I'd accept if they still wanted me. I've got to stay in and wait for their reply."

"Then you've definitely decided to go to England if their offer still holds good?" she asked quietly. She was sitting on the arm of a chair staring down into the empty fireplace. She hadn't taken off her hat and she still held her gloves, rolled up into a tight ball, in her hand.

He nodded. "You bet I have! I'm sick of conditions here. They haven't enough sense to appreciate a man who has genius. Besides, you're up against such petty jealousies and backbiting. I'll be glad to shake the dust of this country off my feet. And you, Starr"—he added a moment later—"you'll enjoy it over there. Be a swell adventure for you. You can come and join me as soon as the divorce is O. K. and we can be married."

She shook her head. Her lips felt very dry suddenly, and she wet them with the tip of her tongue.

"I'm afraid that's out of the question, Stephen. You see"—she paused and smiled slightly—"I think I'll be very busy over here for some time to come."

He started and stared down at her. Perhaps for the first time since she had come into the room he noticed some change in her.

"Busy over here, Starr? What do you mean?"

"I've just been seeing Al Hammond," she said, a little breathlessly.



"I'm going to take that part he offered me. I told him I would."

"What?" He seemed completely stunned. He ran a hand back through his hair and continued to stare down at her, as though he didn't quite know what to say. "You mean you're going to play opposite Rex Brandon?" he asked at last.

"If he's still to be in the picture."

He laughed harshly. "Oh, he'll be in it all right! I see it all now. That's why he threatened to walk out on them. So as to get them to bring influence to bear on you. And"—his voice sharpened with anger—"you've been fool enough to fall for an obvious trick like that!"

Starr's own color mounted, but she managed to control her voice. "Don't let's quarrel about it, Stephen. I've been thinking it over. I do want to go in for movie work. I do want to have my own career."

He raised his thick eyebrows. "In direct opposition to my wishes?" he asked harshly.

"Why should one person try to control another person's actions?" she demurred. "Why shouldn't we all be free to do what we want to do? I loved playing in that last picture. I don't want to give it up."

"Your small success has turned your head," he said bitterly.

"Then you don't think I have real talent?" she asked.

He strode the length of the room before replying. He kicked a footstool out of his way irritably. "Oh, I don't know, Starr. You were good enough," he grumbled. "But I don't want you to go on with it. I want you to help me. As you used to. You can help me, dear, an awful lot. You might do well yourself but, after all, don't you think it's more important——"

"You mean don't you think you're more important?" she interrupted quietly. "You want me to sink my career in yours? That's it, isn't it?"

He swung toward her. "Well, supposing it is? Once we're married my career will be your career and mine's a definitely established thing. After all, a man's work is more important. You can't deny that."

Again that faint smile touched her lips. "You may be right, Stephen, but I am going to play in that picture."

He drew his dark brows together. "And supposing I say I won't let you? I won't have my future wife playing opposite a man like Brandon. As soon as he hears you're to be in the picture he'll come back, too, curse him."

"I thought you said you hated petty jealousies and backbiting," Starr said coldly.

His face turned slowly red. "Petty jealousy, you call it, eh? Petty jealousy when that man's done everything in his power to wreck both my life and my career? He wanted Hammond to take that last picture away from me. But for his lies I'd be directing 'Lovable Rake.'"

"That isn't true," Starr said quietly. "Rex didn't influence Hammond's decision in any way."

Stephen laughed sharply. "You expect me to believe that?"

"But it's true," she insisted. "Al Hammond told me so himself."

"Oh, so you've been discussing me with Al Hammond, have you?" he threw at her angrily.

Her face paled slightly. "Well, yes, in a way. I wanted to know if Rex had really done all the mean things you accused him of." She drew a deep breath and added, "I'm glad he hasn't."



The angry color in Stephen's face deepened. "You won't take my word, I see!" His lips twisted sarcastically. "It's nice to feel your future wife has such confidence in

you that she has to question a third party about the truth of your statements!"

There was a pause. Starr said slowly. "But I don't think I am going to be your future wife, Stephen."

They looked at each other. Starr's eyes were sad. She wanted to say: "Don't let's hurt each other any more than we have to, Stephen. Don't let us say unkind



*Constance Benson Bailey*

He drew his dark brows together. "And supposing I say I won't let you? I won't have my future wife playing opposite a man like Brandon. That man's done everything in his power to wreck both my life and my career."



things we won't want to remember. There's been something beautiful about our relationship in the past. Let us, at least, keep the memory of that beauty."

But Stephen was too angry to respond to the plea in her eyes.

"I see," he said shortly. And added with something which very nearly approached a snarl: "It's Rex, of course!"

"Why should you presume it's Rex?" she asked quickly.

"But it is, isn't it?" he insisted. "You've fallen for his cunning just as Rita did. I thought you had more sense, Starr. I didn't think you'd be taken in by some one so obviously cheap."

"How dare you, Stephen!"

"I am right then!" He laughed bitterly. "We directors put a poor sawdust figure up before the public gaze. We dangle him attractively before the women's eyes and, instead of having the sense to see it's all *us*, they swallow him hook, line and sinker. They actually believe in him! Why, Rex Brandon was nothing but a poor actor when I found him. I started him and if it hadn't been for me——"

"Won't you give Rex credit for anything?" she cut in quietly.

"Why should I give credit where there's no credit due?" he demanded hoarsely. "What is he except a few cheap tricks, a knack of smiling, a way of lifting one eyebrow, that appeals to a lot of silly women? I never thought I should have to class you in that category, Starr!" he ended bitterly.

She thought with a faint smile, "Perhaps that's what I am. Just one of a myriad of silly women. But it's rather nice to be a silly woman for a change and not having to do things because your common sense tells you to."

The telephone rang and Stephen almost ran across the room to answer it. "Yes, yes, this is Stephen Desmond," Starr heard him say into the transmitter. "Yes, yes, read it out to me. . . . What's that? Will you repeat it, please? Thank you. Yes, you can send a copy of the cable later, please."

When he turned toward her again there could be no disguising his satisfaction. "It's all right. They're taking me on my own terms. That ought to show Hammond, shouldn't it? The trouble with our talkies is that they don't recognize a good man when they've got one. Oh, well"—he shrugged carelessly—"it's their own funeral. But they'll be sorry."

Starr said generously: "I'm awfully glad it's turned out so well for you, Stephen. I think you will do big things over there."

He misunderstood her. "You feel differently now? Now you see I'm not the abject failure Rex has painted me?"

"But Rex has said nothing about you." Her voice was tired.

"As if I'd believe that. How has he got you away from me then?"

"He didn't get me away from you, Stephen." She smiled faintly and added: "I think you did it yourself!"

He laughed hollowly. "Women always try to put the blame on the man they're tired of!"

She stood up. "I'm going now, Stephen. I suppose it sounds awfully trite, but can't we part friends?"

"Do you care enough to want to?" His voice was bitter. Perhaps more hurt than bitter. And because Starr sensed this she answered impulsively: "Of course I care, Stephen! You've meant so much to me for so long. I can't cut you



altogether out of my life, even though I might wish to. I'll always be interested in your career, and wish for your success. I'm sure you're going to be successful, too, Stephen."

The warmth of her tones mollified him. "Starr, can't we still go on together?" His voice softened. "I think I'm going to miss you very much, my dear."

She turned her face aside sharply. The tears were stinging the backs of her eyes. She had wanted them to part without bitterness, but now she felt she would even have welcomed that bitterness. At least it wouldn't have hurt like this.

"I'll miss you, too, Stephen."

"Starr, I *am* going to do big things." There was the old eager enthusiastic ring in his voice. "I want to do big things and give all my success to you, dear."

"But, Stephen, I wouldn't have enough to give you in exchange," she said quietly. "And unless you give just as much as you receive, no marriage is ever a success. You ought to know that. It must be a fifty-fifty proposition to go over."

She left shortly afterward. But she cried softly to herself all the way down the stairs. She felt that something big had gone out of her life and as yet there was nothing to take its place. At least nothing she would allow herself to recognize.

She thought: "I wish your feelings always stayed the same toward people. They don't, and you can't help it. But it always hurts. And, somehow, I think it hurts more if you're the first to change."

She was still dabbing her eyes with a handkerchief when she got out into the street and hailed a taxi. She told the driver to take her to Rex's apartment. She had to see him. She had to see him at once

and persuade him to get in touch with Al Hammond before midnight.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Mason, Rex's servant, told her that he hadn't seen his master since early that morning. He expected him in to dinner, however. Starr said she would come in and wait.

The late afternoon sunlight filtered into the sitting room, giving it a pleasant, faintly amber appearance. Starr sank down into a deep armchair, but she couldn't relax. Just what would she say to Rex when he arrived?—she wondered. How could she explain her sudden capitulation and change of front? She felt that if he laughed at her she would never forgive him. She didn't mind his laughing at a lot of things about her, but she couldn't bear him to laugh about this.

She heard the front doorbell and stiffened to a strained attention. She glanced about hurriedly, almost as though seeking some means of escape. But it was a woman's voice in the hallway. A minute later the same woman stood in the doorway.

"Dear, dear," Rita Desmond murmured and laughed. "Rex's sitting room becomes more like the waiting room of a fashionable physician every day. Just what is your complaint, Miss Thayle?"

Starr smiled back at her. "The same as yours, I should imagine, Mrs. Desmond. I want to see Rex Brandon."

"So do most women, my dear! You're quite unoriginal! And what have you done with my strong, stalwart husband in the meantime, if it's not indelicate to ask?" She seated herself on the arm of a chair. "By the way," she murmured after a slight pause, "I suppose you know we'll be divorced quite soon now?"



Starr colored painfully. "Yes, I believe so," she murmured.

Rita snapped open her cigarette case and handed it across to Starr. "Have one? And are you waiting with bells on for the decree, my dear?"

Starr took the cigarette and lighted it. She was glad of something to do with her hands. "No, I'm not going to marry your husband, Mrs. Desmond."

"Dear, dear," Rita murmured again and laughed. "That sounds like a line from a modern play. Well, I don't suppose I can blame you. I found him dull myself."

There was another pause. Rita threw back her head and let a thin spiral of blue-gray smoke glide slowly to the ceiling.

"I feel in a confidential mood," she said at last. "Besides, I'm rather thrilled about it. I'm going to be married myself as soon as I'm free."

It was queer the effect Rita's words had upon Starr. She felt as though some one had suddenly given her a knock-out blow in the pit of her stomach.

"To—to Mr. Brandon, I suppose?" she managed to say at last.

"Oh, dear no," Rita laughed. "This is serious!"

"Your affair with Rex Brandon was serious enough for you to start to elope with him once," Starr retorted tartly.

Rita smiled mysteriously and shook her head. "No, it was never serious. I know that now that I'm really in love. I realize it was just playing at love. Rather luke-warm playing at that. I'm afraid I rushed him. The poor darling was quite horrified when I made him elope with me. And he hadn't even kissed me! You wouldn't believe it, would you?"

"I certainly find it rather hard to believe," Starr said in a voice that was curiously stifled. Yet it was eager, too.

Rita nodded her lovely blond head twice. Her long silver earrings jangled pleasantly. "Just shows how much stranger life is than fiction, doesn't it? That was certainly an insane affair! Rex and I often laugh about it. We're great pals now that I'm engaged to Harry. Funny"—she smiled slightly—"how much more some men appreciate your friendship once they know you're definitely engaged to some other man!"

Starr didn't comment on that. She was too bothered with what Rita was telling her. Could it be the truth?

"But you *did* try to elope," she heard herself stammer.

Rita threw her a searching look and her eyes narrowed curiously.

"But even then it wasn't serious. Rex knew I wasn't really in love with him. That's why he had no intention of going through with it. He told me the other day that his trunk was full of books and that he intended to leave the ship before it sailed. I admit I would have been furious at the time, but, as he said, it would be much better for me to be furious than to have him go through with it, then discover I didn't really love him. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I suppose it would be," Starr murmured unsteadily. She was conscious of an odd sense of elation; a sense that she had never been quite so happy in all her life before.

"Now Harry's quite different," Rita was saying. "We adore each other passionately. He's awfully intense, you know. I'm supposed to be meeting him here. Rex asked



us both to drop in for a cocktail. But I suppose he's been kept at the office again."

Just then they heard the front door open and Rex's voice in the hallway. Starr was seized again by that insane desire to escape. Now it was even more urgent. She felt she could scarcely bear to face Rex.

But she had to, of course. There he stood, tall and lean, smiling slightly, in the doorway. Rita laughed and waved to him gayly. "Here we all are, Rex. Like old-home-town week, isn't it?"

But Rex didn't answer her. He had just seen Starr.

Rita tried again. "I think I'll buzz off if you two don't mind. I'll drive by the office and pick up Harry in the car. We were going out this evening, anyhow, so we haven't much time. You don't mind, do you?" Her eyes twinkled and she answered her own question: "No, of course you don't."

Rex came to with a start. With an effort he withdrew his eyes from Starr. "Oh—er—I'm awfully sorry, Rita. But you'll have a cocktail before you go?"

"Couldn't think of it, darling. Alcohol is so fattening. I've sworn off it for a whole week. Thank heavens, this is the seventh day! But you might see me out, Rex, if it isn't too much bother."

"Yes, of course, Rita." He spoke jerkily, as though, despite a strenuous effort, he couldn't keep his mind on what she was saying.

"You'll excuse me?" He turned formally to Starr.

"Yes, of course." Starr found her voice with an effort.

Rita waved two gloved fingers in Starr's direction. "Good-by, my dear. I'm sure you'll feel better for our little chat. It's queer," she mused, "how magnanimous one can

be to one's rival, once one is safely in love with some one else!"

"I'm sorry Harry couldn't get here," Rex said in the hall. "You must bring him in some other time."

Rita opened her blue eyes very wide. "Oh, but he could get here. He may be here any moment. Send him on after me, won't you?"

"Then why——" Rex began, puzzled.

Rita squeezed his arm affectionately. "This is my good deed for the day! Or rather it's my second." She laughed and added: "You may find out about the first one later on." She blew him a kiss and disappeared into the elevator.

Rex closed the door and walked back into the sitting room. Curiously, he found that his hands were shaking. He thrust them deep into his pockets.

But once inside the doorway he didn't appear in the least nervous. He crossed his feet and leaned indolently against the radio. He even contrived a faintly derisive grin.

"Well, Starr, dropped in to have a cocktail?"

She shook her head. She couldn't be casual just then. "It's—it's about your playing lead in that picture 'Lovable Rake,'" she began in a rush.

His smile faded. "But I'm not going to play lead in it."

She knotted her hands together tightly.

"Yes, you are, Rex. You must."

He raised one eyebrow. "Must, Starr? And where do you come in, since you're not playing in the picture yourself?"

"But I am, Rex." She swallowed some obstruction in her throat. "I agreed to do it this afternoon."

"Oh!" He raised the other eyebrow. "I thought your boy friend objected!"





*"No, my affair with Rex was never serious," said Rita. "I know that now that I'm really in love. I realize it was just playing at love. The poor darling was quite horrified when I made him elope with me. And he hadn't even kissed me! You wouldn't believe it, would you?"*

She turned her face aside sharply. "I am going to play in it," she repeated in a strained voice.

"Wise girl! I thought the lure of stardom would prove too much

for you. Pity I'm not going to play in it myself now."

"But you must," she insisted.

He shrugged slightly. "Too late, child. Al gave me until six to



capitulate and I didn't capitulate. I bet he's as mad as ten snakes. My contract is probably in little bits in the waste-paper basket by now."

She leaned a little forward. She said hurriedly: "But I saw him, Rex. He's promised to give you until midnight to decide."

He was staring at her. "You saw him on my behalf?" he asked incredulously.

"Yes, I"—she swallowed again—"I couldn't bear to have you sacrifice your contract, Rex."

"You seem very concerned about me all of a sudden," he said lightly. He shook a finger at her and added mockingly: "Better be careful, my dear. Your future husband mightn't like it!"

"I haven't got a future husband and—and you needn't be so mean to me." Her voice suddenly broke. She turned her face aside, and sniffed hard twice.

Rex straightened. The mocking light died out of his eyes. He crossed over to her in two quick strides. He sat down on the arm of her chair and put two fingers under her chin and forced her to look up at him.

"What is all this about, child?"

"Nothing." Starr sniffed harder. "Only I didn't want you to sacrifice your contract and——"

Rex laughed softly. He put an arm about her shoulders and drew her to him. "So you didn't want me to sacrifice my contract? I should have thought that was the one thing in the world that would please you most."

She said in a small, choked voice: "I hate you, Rex Brandon."

He laughed again gently, and drew her more closely to him.

"That's better, child. More up to old form, eh? Let's have it again. Only louder this time and with more conviction. I hate you, hate you, hate you, Rex Brandon."

But she didn't say it. So he kissed her. And after he had kissed her for quite a long while he said: "How's the hating now?"

Starr laughed shakily. "It's died down for the moment, Rex." She hid her face against his shoulder. He put his lips against her ear and whispered: "And how's the loving, darling?"

She gulped a little. "It's coming on fine, thanks very much."

They both laughed and he said: "Blessed if I know how you could ever have been such a stubborn little fool, Starr!"

But she didn't seem to mind even that. Perhaps it's hard to make an insult sound convincing when you're holding the girl you're insulting in your arms at the time and kissing her every other minute.

Al Hammond almost choked over his morning coffee. There it was in headlines: "Rex Brandon to co-star with fiancée in next picture. A wonderful screen romance——" he began reading. But before he was halfway through the column he was on the telephone, calling his publicity man.

"Say, George, this is great," he enthused. "Just the stuff the public will eat up. It will put the new girl across big, too. You're a genius, lad. But are you sure it won't make Rex mad?"

"Mad? No!" George laughed easily. "This is the first publicity story I've ever written that happens to be true!"

THE END.







# All's Fair In Love

By Zelda Vaughn

CAROL, don't you want to stretch your legs a bit?"

A rapt look in her green-gray eyes, Carol Foster looked up from the magazine she had been eagerly reading.

George was standing before her in the aisle of the motionless train.

"We're at Salt Lake City," he smiled. "Don't you want to get off and walk around for a few minutes?"

"No, George. I'm right in the middle of a story. You run along."

"All right. I suppose that's another movie magazine you've got there. Well, we'll soon be in Hollywood." He started for the door. "You'll be right here when I come back, won't you?"

Carol nodded with a trace of annoyance. George was so protective, always watching over her as if she couldn't take care of herself. Now he was accompanying her from New York on the pretext of business in Hollywood.



He was a quite successful young lawyer. She would probably accept one of his regular proposals in the near future and settle down to steady married life. There would be no dashes across the continent then. With a sigh, she bent over the magazine again.

The wheels of the train were pounding on rapidly, monotonously, when Carol finally threw aside the magazine. She peered through the window at the splendor of the dying Western sun, then turned to George who sat in the next Pullman chair.

"Well, how did you like Salt Lake City, George? Are the girls as beautiful there as back home?" she bantered.

"I guess they are," he replied honestly. "They're dressed in style, too. Why, a girl who got on the train wore an exact copy of the suit and hat you're wearing! For a moment I thought she was you."

"The nerve of her! And I bought this ensemble in New York." Carol rose stiffly and tried to stretch herself in the swaying car. "I wish I could take a walk now."

As if complying with her wishes, the train slowed down, then came to a puffing halt at a small station.

"That's service!" she exclaimed. "I'm going to take advantage of it."

George got up. "I'll go with you."

"No." She motioned him to sit down again. "You don't need to."

"Hurry back, then," he called after her. "We may be stopping only for a minute."

Carol was glad to have solid earth under her feet once more. She felt gloriously free and unconfined. She would have plenty of time to stretch her legs a bit before the train started again; the engineer was poking an oil can into his tangle of machinery.

She decided to walk briskly once around the building in the swiftly

gathering twilight. At least she could get out of sight of the train for the first time in days, if only for a few seconds.

But she never got around the station.

A pair of strong arms suddenly lifted her from the ground and deposited her gently but quickly in a big yellow roadster. Before she was able to scream for help, her mysterious captor jumped in beside her, raced the motor deafeningly, and sent the car roaring away.

"Let me go! Let me go, I tell you! How dare you do this?" His arm was tight about Carol's slim waist, making her struggles futile.

He was chuckling, his eyes on the dark road. "All's fair in love and war, Lorraine. I told you I wouldn't let you go to Hollywood alone. We can go there on our honeymoon."

Honeymoon! He must be a madman, Carol decided; or else—yes, he had called her "Lorraine." She relaxed against the seat as her composure returned. The young man had probably mistaken her for the girl on the train whom George had mentioned.

"You're not going on any honeymoon with me," she told the stranger coldly. "One of the reasons is that my name happens to be Carol."

"Carol!" The car skidded to an abrupt stop. His surprised blue eyes stared into her indignant green-gray ones as they saw each other's faces for the first time.

"Why, you're not Lorraine; you're not my fiancée!" he said incredulously, concernedly.

"No, I'm not your fiancée, and I'm not interested in her. The question is, what are you going to do about it?"

He ran his fingers through his unruly dark hair with a nervous gesture. "What do you mean?"



His tanned face looked extraordinarily appealing. She liked his rough shirt, his worn riding clothes, the hint of firmness about his whimsical mouth.

She was not going to let him off so easy, however. Her voice was as stern and uncompromising as she could make it.

"Do you realize that my train must have gone on without me, leaving me stranded in this God-forsaken place, all because of you?"

But he was laughing. Then he grinned at her boyishly, apologetically. "I'm sorry. You sounded exactly like my old school-teacher." His voice became serious. "She wasn't anything like you, though; she was very homely."

Despite herself, faint color crept into Carol's cheeks, for he was leaning nearer to her, strange lights in the depths of his eyes.

"I'm sorry I laughed at you, but I'm not sorry I kidnaped you, Carol. My name is Neil Rogers. I hope you like it."

Before she could frame a suitable retort for this impudence, he stepped on the gas and the roadster leaped forward again.

She stole a glimpse at his nice profile as they sped on. He was quite a dangerous young man. For the first time in her twenty years she found herself at a disadvantage with a man. Well, she was dangerous, too, Carol admitted to herself.

"Where are we going, Neil?" she asked softly, meekly.

He glanced down at her quickly, as if suspecting hidden mischief. "I'm taking you to Milford, a few miles ahead. I'll have your train flagged so that you can get on again."

"Oh." Somehow she felt let down, disappointed. "But you can't beat the train to Milford, can you?"

"Yes, I can. This car can do seventy easily."

But the car was not destined to do seventy just then, for big raindrops began to spatter down. Because of the approach of night they had failed to notice the storm clouds.

At the first drop, Neil stopped the car, jumped out, and raised the adjustable top. "When it rains out here, it really rains," he informed her, as he fastened the top carefully to the supports.

He was right. Chilly torrents started to pour down to the accompaniment of jagged, blinding flashes of lightning and terrifying peals of thunder.

Carol didn't mind it; in fact, she liked it. She felt cozy and secure in the car. Taking off her hat, she shook her gold-glittered red hair. Then, looking in the mirror over the windshield, she arranged her waves a bit.

Somewhat startled at the calm way in which she was making herself completely at home, Neil was unable to give his full attention to the road. That didn't matter, however, for they had not gone more than half a mile when he heard the ominous thump of a flat tire.

"Serves him right!" Carol said to herself unjustly, as he changed the tire out in the rain. She was thinking of his fiancée. She had said she was not interested in her, but she was—intensely.

She felt angry at herself for the way thoughts of the other girl kept recurring. Lorraine must be a high-powered, dizzy blonde, Carol decided; Neil was probably too good for her. Carol took another long, appraising look at herself in the mirror.

Although soaked to the skin, Neil was surprisingly cheerful when he reentered the car.



"Well, I guess we won't be able to get to Milford in time," he went on hurriedly, assuringly: "But I'll get you on that train somehow, even if I have to send you by plane."

"You seem anxious to get rid of me," she remarked. She was regaining the advantage.

"No, no! On the contrary——"

There was sudden torment on his face, in his voice. Then he recovered himself.

"I'm going to show you some real Western hospitality. My place is a couple of miles from here. My housekeeper will have dinner ready, and I'll get into dry clothes."

He didn't ask her about it; he just told her. Carol felt the advantage slipping away from her.

"I don't understand it," Neil muttered, half to himself, when they reached the house and he fumbled in his wet pockets for the key. "I told her to be here to-night."

Carol said nothing, but looked at him with an enigmatic expression.

They were standing under the shelter of the wide veranda that circled the big rambling house which was a few hundred yards off the main highway. The house was dark inside, indicating that the housekeeper was not there.

Neil threw open the door and switched on the lights. "I'm terribly sorry my housekeeper isn't here. I'll bet you're hungry, too."

His blue eyes were sincere, contrite, begging her to forgive him. Carol's faint doubts were swept away, to be replaced by a strange tugging at her heart.

"You must have a pretty poor opinion of me—kidnaping you, starving you." It was almost a question.

He must have read the answer in her eyes, for a glow suddenly lighted his features. He moved to the fireplace.

"I may not be much of a cook, but at least I won't let you freeze," he told her as he bent down with a match. The wood caught fire, settled into a cheerful blaze. "Now I'll change into other clothes, and then we'll go to Milford for supper."

A few minutes later, Neil came out of his room to find the living room warm but deserted. There were tantalizing scents in the air, odd noises in the kitchen.

Carol, flushed, her hair awry, glanced up from the electric stove to discover him on the threshold, staring at her.

"You didn't suppose that just because you couldn't cook I couldn't either, did you?" she demanded.

Before he could reply, she went on, like a little sergeant: "Don't stand there! Put on another apron and peel the potatoes. Please leave them bigger than marbles." She smiled inwardly as he obeyed her mechanically.

The kitchen seemed perfectly equipped, and dinner was soon ready.

Neil was silent until they had nearly finished eating. "I didn't know there were any girls left who could cook," were his only words.

His eyes were wondering, tender. They wandered into the living room and sank onto the sofa in front of the fire. Every once in a while





gusts of wind outside would hurl the rain against the windows, leaving it to stream down the panes like a child's tears.

The firelight burnished Carol's face, shimmered on her satin blouse as she watched the flames, acutely aware of Neil's gaze on her.

"Sometimes your hair looks red," he said suddenly, "and sometimes it looks gold."

"It's red-gold."

"Oh!"

They both laughed at that, a shaken, self-conscious sort of laughter.

"Carol—Carol." He was murmuring it, intoning it. "There's music in that name."

"Don't you think 'Lorraine' is a nice name?" She couldn't help asking it. She was falling in love; she must do something to save herself.

But she was unable to interpret the curious look on his features, for at that moment there came a loud, insistent knock at the door.

Slowly, reluctantly, Neil got up, went to the door, and opened it. A man walked into the room, followed by a girl.

It was George!

Carol felt a bit ashamed, a bit annoyed. "Leave it to him to find me out, like a knight-errant of old," she thought bitterly. She had forgotten all about him.

But who was the girl with him?

The answer leaped into Carol's mind. The other girl was wearing a reproduction of her own ensemble. She must be the girl George had seen on the train. Neil and the strange girl didn't appear to know each other.

George came forward. "Carol! Are you all right? I have been so worried about you."

"Of course I'm all right. Why shouldn't I be?" she asked abruptly.

"That scoundrel there didn't—didn't force his attentions on you?" George sounded somewhat surprised.

"Not that I recall." She regarded the "scoundrel," but Neil's face was expressionless.

"I came in time then."

"Don't be absurd, George. Neil is a gentleman."

"How do you know? You've known him only a couple of hours."

Carol didn't reply. She couldn't tell George that her heart told her she was right.

Taking her silence for agreement with his views, George turned with his best courtroom manner to her impassive abductor.

"People in Milford said that you are Neil Rogers. Is that right?"

"Yes."

"You own a large yellow roadster?"

"Yes."

"It is the only one of its kind in this section, is it not?"

"I believe so."

George was becoming irritated. "Your business, I take it, is kidnapping young women?" he demanded caustically.

Neil's face darkened. "I'm a mining engineer——"

"I think we've had enough of this cross-examination," broke in Carol. "George, I want you to apologize to Neil for saying that."

"I apologize," George said ungraciously. "Now get your things, Carol, and——"

But Carol was now giving her undivided attention to the girl who had remained quietly in the background, but who was obviously interested in the affair.

"Oh, excuse me." George lost much of his self-assurance as he turned to the girl. "This is Betty—I mean Miss Hunt."



Then, for no apparent reason, he flushed deeply and stumbled through the rest of the introduction.

Carol was sure of one thing now: Betty Hunt and Neil had not been acquainted before. That only added to her puzzlement, however.

"Come come, George," she urged impatiently. "Stop blushing and tell all. You and Betty are old friends, I suppose?"

"Well, sort of," he admitted. "When we were kids, we lived near each other in the East. Then Betty's family moved out West, and we lost track of each other."

He had not told her this on the train, Carol realized. Then Betty had been merely a girl wearing an ensemble like hers, a girl he had almost mistaken for Carol.

Before she could comment, he went on hurriedly: "When the train started moving again I looked through every car for you, but I couldn't find you."

"But you found Betty——"

"Yes, I did," he interrupted defensively. "She helped me quite a lot. She remembered seeing that big yellow roadster, and she even got off at Milford with me to help find you; she knows her way around this section."

"That was nice of her," said Carol.

"Yes, it was," George agreed unnecessarily. Then, feeling it incumbent on himself to break the growing silence: "By the way, Betty is going to Hollywood, too. Aren't you, Betty?"

"Well, I was going"—the girl smiled at him somewhat trustfully—"but after what you told me about how hard it is to get into the movies, I'm not so sure."

The silence of Neil and Carol grew more pronounced, as if they were waiting for the next move from George.

"Well——" he said. "Well, you'd better get your things, Carol. We're going to Milford. I've got a hired car outside."

"Why, there's no need for you to go to town in this weather when there are plenty of rooms here," said Neil, once more the courteous host.

George shook his head. "No, no. We'll manage all right."

"I don't think so," Neil argued, spurred on by Carol's hesitation. "There are no hotels in Milford, and I'll bet your car is an open one; you and Miss Hunt looked soaked. You're not going to make the girls leave shelter now, are you?"

That settled it. George was forced to give in, mumbling thanks as Neil indicated their rooms.

Carol smiled up at him delightfully. "Thank you, Neil. It's nice of you." She felt a happy little tingle go through her at the responding flash of his white teeth against his tawny skin.

Neil reached into a closet and took out a raincoat and a battered hat.

"We can't leave your car out in this rain all night," he told George. "I'll put it in my garage for you; you wouldn't be able to find your way around the yard."

Although he was gone for only a few minutes, when he came in again Neil felt instinctively that something was wrong. Stillness, tenseness surcharged the air.

He tossed aside his hat and raincoat. George and Betty went into their respective rooms. Carol stood by the fireplace, waiting.

Her eyes were like a cold winter sea, yet with a flicker in their depths. In her voice were mingled emotions—anger, hope, bitterness.

"George has just told me that you were on our train when it left New York. Is that true?"



Neil seemed to brace himself, although he remained motionless. "Yes," he answered simply.

"Then you knew who I was at that little station? You knew whom you were kidnaping? There is no Lorraine, no fiancé?" Her voice was becoming more bitterly accusing.

"No, Carol."

"Don't you dare call me 'Carol'!" Her inner turmoil was making everything seem unreal. The world of illusions which she had built in the few hours she had known Neil was crumbling to pieces.

How could he stand there like that? Why didn't he say something, do something? It was all his fault; she had tried not to fall in love with him. Her heart was his now, yet he was doing nothing about it!

"George did come in time!" she burst out furiously, unreasoningly. "Everything you told me was a lie. You have no housekeeper. Your place is conveniently located away from other people, isn't it? You had it all planned perfectly, didn't you? You unspeakable cad!"

Her hand leaped up, as if by its own will, and landed resoundingly, sharply on his cheek.

Neil recoiled involuntarily, his fingers touching the spot where startling whiteness was fading into his tanned skin. Then for a second he looked down into her horror-filled face.

"You have no right to say that to me!" His strong hands were gripping her shoulders painfully; his eyes were blazing into hers. "I did kidnap you and lie to you, but I did it because I love you!"

There was an exultation, an anguish in his voice that made her tremble. "I love you; do you understand? I fell in love with you the moment I saw you. Love at first sight! I never believed in it until I

got on the train at New York. I wanted to meet you, alone, but that George person was always with you. I couldn't bear it any longer. I got off at Denver and took the plane to Salt Lake City where I have my office. Then, driving home along the stretch where the road runs parallel with the tracks, I kept pace with the lighted train, watched you at the window! When the train stopped, I stopped, too, for one last look. Can you blame me for what happened after that?

"Can you blame me?" he repeated. "All's fair in love, isn't it?"

"You're—you're hurting my shoulders," Carol said faintly, tremulously.

"I don't care!" But his voice became infinitely tender and despairing. "Carol, Carol, your eyes are mysterious enchantment; your hair is magic; your lips——"

She was conscious only of two blue sparks, catching the tinder of her desire, flaming up in the rapture of his lips on hers, his arms straining her to him.

But there was only that one timeless kiss.

His head lifted. His arms loosened their hold on her. He turned away, his features drawn, grim.

Her hand—the one that had told him stingingly that she hated him—touched his own gently, penitently. "I'm sorry, Neil."

"I don't want your pity!" It was the unheeding, resentful echo of a wounded man.

"No, no! Neil, you don't understand!" She was saying it brokenly to herself, for he had strode away from her, into his room.

And hot tears were blurring her sight, running down her cheeks.

Carol awoke with a start, and gazed about her as morning sun



flooded the unfamiliar room with cheerful light. Then she remembered.

Listlessly she got out of bed, went to the window. The rolling plains had swallowed up the night's rain,

"Good morning. You're up early. Did you have a good night's sleep?"

It was a plump, middle-aged woman, who seemed very much at home among the pots and pans, and looked as though she belonged there.



leaving a sweet, wonderful freshness in the air.

Although she was hardly aware of it, her spirits began to rise as she dressed. She loved him, and he had said he loved her. That was all she needed just now.

There was subdued sound coming from the direction of the kitchen. Neil was probably trying to make his own breakfast. She ought to go and help him.

Carol hurried to the kitchen, to be greeted as she entered by a cordial:

"Yes, thank you." Carol gave her a bewildered look.

"Well, I'm glad to hear that. Sit down now and I'll give you something to eat." The woman bustled about. "I'm sorry that I couldn't get over here last night. Mr. Neil had told me just when he'd get back from his business trip, too."

"Is—has he had his breakfast yet?"

"Oh, yes. He's out taking a walk now."

Carol sat down and began to eat





*His features were drawn and grim. "I don't want your pity!" It was the unheeding, resentful echo of a wounded man. And he strode away from her, into his room.*

in thoughtful silence. Suddenly, impulsively, she jumped to her feet, ran out of the kitchen, and tiptoed to the door of George's room.

"George—get up, George!" She tapped quietly on his door until he woke up.

"Who's there?" he called. "Is that you, Betty?"

"No, it isn't Betty. It's Carol. And don't make so much noise. I want you to get dressed right away. Hurry now—it's important."

A few minutes later he joined her in the living room, very much mystified and perturbed.

Carol came to the point without

preliminaries. "George, I want you to take me to Salt Lake City."

"What!"

"You heard me. I'm going to Hollywood by plane."

"But, Carol, it's early yet. What's the rush?"

"I don't want to stay here any longer."

"Oh, I see." George cleared his throat understandingly. "Carol, I don't think Neil Rogers is such a bad fellow, after all."

"And I don't think Betty Hunt is so bad, either."

He changed color; then: "Say, we can't leave Betty here! You'll have to wait until she wakes up so she can go along with us."

"Listen, George, you can meet me in Hollywood. All I want you to do right now is take me to the Salt Lake City airport. You can come back here again for breakfast."

"But if Betty wakes before I return she'll think I've deserted her."

"I'll leave a note then. You get the car out of the garage while I'm writing it. Hurry!"

George departed hastily. Carol ran into the kitchen where the friendly housekeeper furnished her with pencil and paper.

"Now," said Carol to the woman, "I want you to give this note to Mr. Rogers as soon as he gets back from his walk. Remember—give it to Neil."

George was sitting impatiently, uneasily in the touring car on the side driveway when Carol appeared.

"I thought you were in a hurry," he reminded her, as he drove the car carefully down to the highway.

"I couldn't think of what to write





*She was sitting beside him in the yellow roadster, and he was murmuring: "Darling, adorable, sweet child! Carol, I——" But George was standing beside the roadster, staring at them.*

—at first." She was peering back at the house.

The green of her eyes deepened as she caught sight of a distant, running man. It was Neil. She could see him halting at the foot of the veranda, watching them as they gathered speed. Now he was slowly mounting the steps.

George was silent for a few miles, then he turned somewhat confusedly to his fair passenger.

"Carol—there's something I've got to talk to you about." He hesitated, then plunged: "I've always thought that I—well, that I was in love with you—but——"

Carol wasn't listening. She had turned and was looking at the road behind them.

"Say," he demanded, "why are you always looking back like that? Any one would think the police were after us." He glanced into the windshield mirror, and his face changed. "Somebody is after us!"

A long yellow roadster, its powerful motor humming louder and louder, was rounding a curve, several hundred yards behind them. It seemed to be overtaking them.

"It's Rogers!" George blurted out. "Carol, do you know anything about this?" he demanded suspiciously.



She regarded him with wide-eyed innocence, but did not answer.

With a terrific roar the roadster came up behind them. As he hurtled by, Neil smiled and waved his hand gayly. There was an ear-splitting screech of brakes. When the cloud of dust settled, the yellow roadster was half turned on the road, completely blocking the way.

George brought his car to a stop only a few feet away. As he did so, Neil leaped out of the roadster.

Two arms reached in quickly, hungrily, and Carol was lifted lightly out of the seat, held tightly in Neil's embrace. She clung to him happily, and his lips brushed her hair, her cheek, as he carried her.

Then she was sitting beside him in the yellow roadster, and he was murmuring: "Darling, adorable, sweet child! Carol, I——"

But George was standing beside the roadster, staring at them.

"George," said Neil, "don't keep a lady waiting. Betty is expecting you. Good luck to you!"

And with that he straightened the roadster in the highway, and raced ahead.

"Oh! Neil, look out!"

He swung aside just in time to miss going into a ditch. He had tried to snatch a kiss as they rode on.

He stopped the car at once. "Do you think I'm made of stone?" he demanded. He took her in his arms, crushed her in a deep embrace.

Her lips were quivering under the throbbing passion of his kiss; her heart was pounding; her arms were clinging to him.

His eyes searched hers. "You do love me, don't you, Carol?"

She nodded, a bit shyly.

"You darling little imp! Why did you leave before I could talk to you again? And why—if you cared for me—did you take a chance on a few scribbled words?"

From his pocket he pulled out a piece of paper and read: "All's fair in love!"

"Suppose my housekeeper had forgotten to give me this note?" The anxiety in his voice was thrilling to Carol. "Suppose she had lost it? We might never——"

"I didn't take any chances—if you really loved me as you said you did. Besides, I could always have made George turn around and go back, if I'd wanted to." She nestled closer to him. "I could even have written to you from Hollywood."

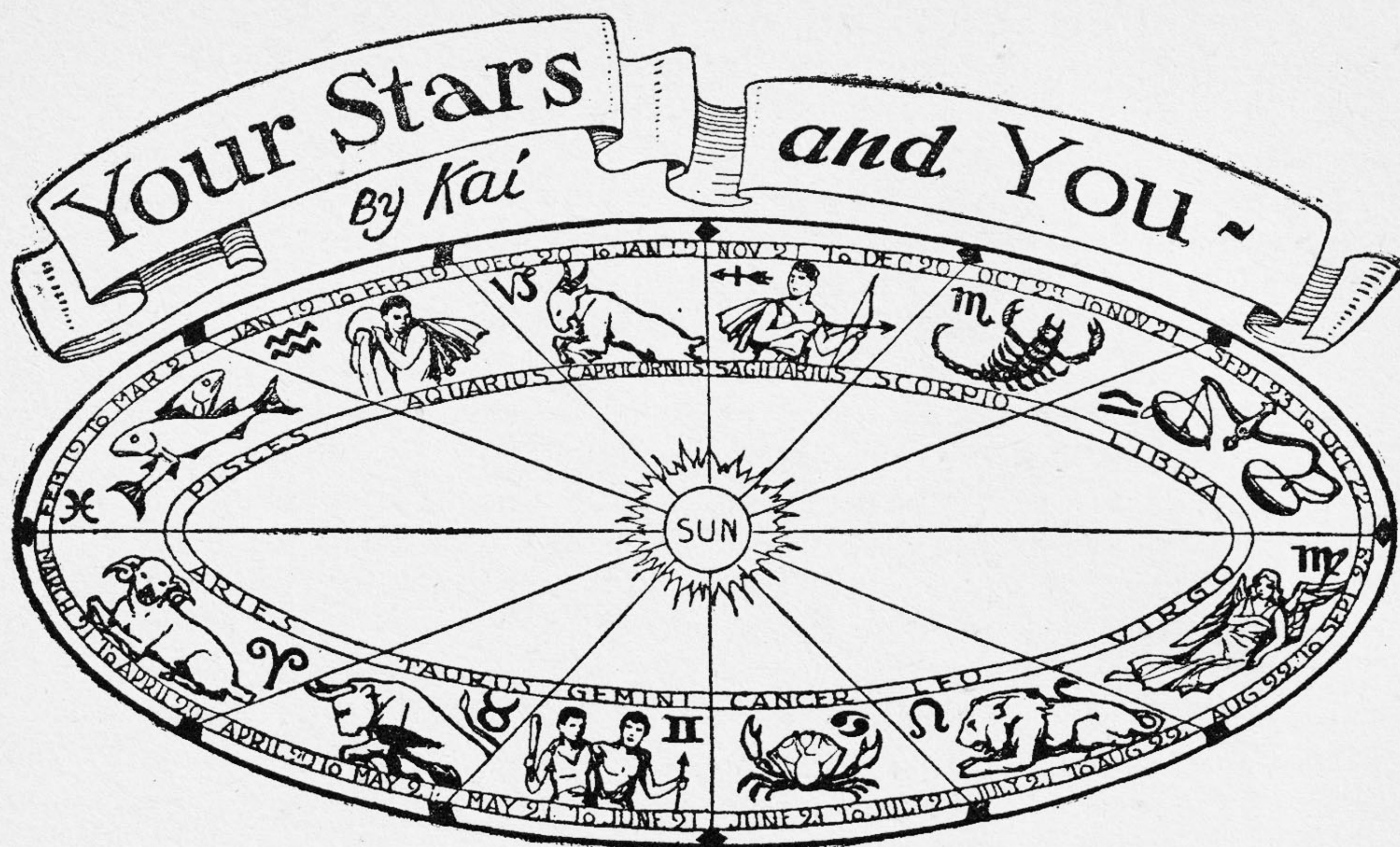
"But I might not have heard from you for hours, days! And Hollywood—Carol, you don't really want to be an actress, do you?" he pleaded.

"Of course not, silly! I was going there to visit relatives. Now don't say anything for a little while, Neil—just hold me tight and kiss me some more!"

Neil held her tight and kissed her—kisses that thrilled her with perfect happiness, that called forth all her love, that set her heart on fire. "Darling, darling, darling!" he murmured. Then there was silence in the big yellow roadster as Carol clung to him, and Neil held her as if she was something infinitely precious, something he would never let go.







## YOUR WEEK

This is a much better week than the preceding seven days. It will be possible for you to make this a week of constructive and satisfactory effort. You will have to know what you are doing in order to accomplish your purpose and fulfill your schedule. It is distinctly a week for business and concentrated activity. You will not always find your relations with others pleasant or without a feeling of strain and upheaval, except for specified times stated in the "Day by Day" section, but you will have to ignore unpleasant occurrences and reactions and act according to your planned schedule. Thursday is the most pleasant day of the week. The keynotes for the week are restraint and conservative procedure.

## DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time

Saturday,  
February  
25th

♌

This is a very good day. The morning hours will be active, and until noon you should be able to execute a good morning's work. There will be a distinct feeling of release and more desirable reactions than there have been throughout the preceding days. The evening hours are adaptable for

pleasure, amusement, social contacts, and expansive relations with your fellow man.

Sunday,  
February  
26th

☺

This is a favorable day, but it does not carry anything of an outstanding feature. There is an undertone of pleasant relationship and stability. You may pursue your usual Sunday interests and duties with confidence. The evening hours are especially suitable for making plans for your activities during the current week.

Monday,  
February  
27th

☾

This will be a busy day for most of us, no doubt. The aspects are not entirely free from uncertainty or nervous reactions until three thirty this afternoon. It would be desirable to act with deliberate forethought during the major part of the day and avoid speculative matters. Do not believe all you hear prior to mid-afternoon. The evening hours are disturbing emotionally and carry an erratic quality, but they are not unpleasant, and if you act with an amount of reserve and discre-



tion, you should find the day fairly satisfactory.

**Tuesday,  
February  
28th**

♂

This is a good commercial day with an undercurrent of force and stable action. Do not try to exercise your "rights," so-called, too much. The tendency to-day will be to insinuate your ideas upon others, thereby creating antagonistic reactions. This is not an ideal day for social contacts or recreational interests.

**Wednesday,  
March  
1st**

♂

This is one of those peculiar days that can be made very unpleasant. The morning hours are forceful and, in spite of continued activity and effort, there will be delays and restraint. It will be necessary to exert every ounce of self-control and use premeditated thought before going into action until three thirty in the afternoon. Do not speak sharply; stick to business and be careful of accident until mid-afternoon. The remainder of the day and the evening hours are very favorable. There is an undercurrent of sane thinking, the tendency to be expansive and the ability to plan logically throughout the entire evening.

**Thursday,  
March  
2nd**

♂

This is a good day. Carry out your plans and proceed with confidence. It is a favorable day for commercial interests, interviews, contacts, and general routine. The evening hours are pleasant and your activities to-day should produce satisfactory results.

**Friday,  
March  
3rd**

♀

To-day is not very good from a planetary standpoint. The morning hours are disturbing and many unpleasant circumstances will occur. The afternoon is nervous and uncertain. The evening hours are subject to quarrels and upsetting conditions, particularly near ten thirty o'clock. The later evening hours is the most satisfactory part of the day.

## IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN

March 21st and April 20th

(Aries ♈)

—Aries people born between April 5th and 13th are under erratic, restless, and changeable influences, but the current week is active for them, and there will be an underlying note of pleasantry. Relations with others will be fairly satisfactory, but there will be disturbing conditions in connection with partners during this period. It is a current seven days when you may engage successfully in social activities. If born the first ten days in April, this is a constructive and stable period for you and will find your problems nearer to being solved than they have been for some time in the past. Keep your temper under control when dealing with occupational matters.

April 20th and May 21st

(Taurus ♉)

—Taureans born between May 6th and 12th are operating with excellent influences from the planets. You may not be able to adjust your affairs immediately, but your aspects in later months are favorable, and everything you are doing at this time is important in your material welfare. You will have to bear with any turbulence and strain, but rest assured that you are living in an important period of your existence and make every day count. The current week will be unusually active for you, but your aspects for dealing with the opposite sex during the immediate seven days are not as desirable as they might be. Taureans born between April 28th and May 5th are not operating with desirable influences. This is an energetic seven days for the latter group, but at this time there is an aspect to your chart that indicates delays and restrictions, and you will have to be patient with present conditions and wait for the turn in your affairs. Live as conservatively as possible.

May 21st and June 21st

(Gemini ♊)

—Geminians born between June 9th and 15th are subject to restlessness and changeable conditions at the present time. It would be very wise for you to guard your health and your pocketbook, and force yourself to live under a set schedule. You are under decided nervous and emotional aspects and you will have to curb all impulses which are not fortified with a definite and strict purpose. The current week



is especially turbulent and annoying for you, although your indications for these seven days point to desirable relations emotionally and domestically. If born between May 24th and June 3rd you are operating under sound and stable influences for commercial endeavor and aspects for the use of good judgment. This period for the latter group will not be without upheaval or health complications, but you will have to ignore most of the unpleasantness and realize that you are influencing your future material welfare by the action you take at this time.

June 21st and July 21st  
(Cancer ♋)

—Cancerians born between July 8th and 15th are operating with mixed planetary influences. There will be strain and upheaval mentally and in connection with your business affairs, but the current week is active for you and you are in line for new responsibilities and fresh opportunities. Try to ignore the undesirable factors of your existence and plod along with confidence. If born between June 28th and July 4th, you may expect to be very busy and active for the next few months, but do not try to push yourself too much. You can expect to work harder than usual and have irritating conditions in connection with your work, but you are operating with better influences at this time than you have had for several months in the past. A complete turn of the time has not arrived for you as yet, though.

July 21st and August 22nd  
(Leo ♌)

—Leo people born between July 29th and August 6th will find this an upsetting period in personal matters and there will be delays and unpleasant developments in connection with business affairs and employment. Your affairs relating to partnerships (marital and business) will be very annoying and quite unsatisfactory. This is a time for you to be cautious in trusting servants and employees, also. If born between August 8th and 14th there will be changes in your routine and plans, and you will have an opportunity to expand your interests. A word of warning to this latter group: Your planetary conditions later in the year are not entirely satisfactory to you. Be careful about enlarging your scale of living and entering into extensive projects.

August 22nd and September 23rd  
(Virgo ♍)

—Virgo people born during the first ten days in September will find employment and health matters disturbing at this time. You are subject to excessive energy and quarrelsome instincts. Your days will be busy ones, but you will have to keep your equilibrium if you expect to make this a constructive time. If born between September 8th and 14th do not deal too seriously with the opposite sex during the current week. The immediate seven days are worrisome and emotional, and you will be forced to adjust yourself to minor changes. However, this is a time of expansion for you, and it will be beneficial to your interest if you will travel with the tide of events and observe wherein you may progress materially.

September 23rd and October 22nd  
(Libra ♎)

—Librans born between October 1st and 8th are operating with constructive, stimulating, and energetic influences. But you will have to go along quietly for a few weeks until you have more support from the planets. This is a good year for you, and it is essential that you make each current day a part of the eventual goal. If born between October 9th and 15th you will experience pleasant emotional reactions this week, and be unusually alert mentally, but you should curb restlessness and the desire to change, unless your decisions are based upon the schedule you have as an objective during the latter months in this year.

October 22nd and November 21st  
(Scorpio ♏)

—Scorpio people born between October 30th and November 7th are due to find their affairs in a disordered, disappointing state at this time, and they will experience reactions of an extremely emotional, unsettled, and forceful nature. Efforts at this time will not result according to your desires or plans, so you might as well save your energies, your temper and disposition, and the feelings of those associated with your life. Be prepared for delays and sacrifices. If born between November 8th and 14th, you will find this an energetic, busy week, but a most unsatisfactory one if you delve too deeply into your relations with the opposite sex. You will find your sentiments and feelings unusually stimulating, so it might be advisable to use restraint



and control if you care to avoid disagreeable reactions. You will have opportunities presented to you at this time, but use caution because the results will not be as you have visualized them.

**November 21st and December 20th**  
(Sagittarius ♐)

—Sagittarians born between December 8th and 15th will find this a pleasant week socially and emotionally, but a disturbing one mentally because of petty annoyances and excessive brainwork requirements due to current developments. You will feel very restless, will be upset in connection with domestic affairs and your financial interests will require unusual attention. This is a time for conservation, mentally, physically, spiritually, and economically. If born between November 30th and December 5th, you will find most developments very disturbing at this time, but there is an undercurrent of stability in your life and you will be able to use better judgment in relation to your affairs than you have been able to do for some time in the immediate past. Do not expect everything to adjust itself suddenly. That is not possible because you have to take your experience of the past few months, blend it with your expectations of the future, make your plans accordingly, then work toward the goal.

**December 20th and January 19th**  
(Capricorn ♑)

—Capricornians born between December 30th and January 6th will find this an unusually active and emotional period in their lives. You are operating with stable and sound influences, which will tinge your judgment and feelings in a constructive way, and the results will be in accordance with the amount of effort and aspiration you use and exhibit. If born between January 6th and 13th, you are operating with conflicting influences. The current week will bring you mental and physical activity, and social participation, with opportunities for advancement. Your planetary conditions for change are still in existence, and these moves you are contemplating are all right, as long as you are cognizant of the objective which is most beneficial to your interests.

**January 19th and February 19th**  
(Aquarius ♒)

—Aquarians born between January 26th and February 3rd will find this a fairly

quiet period. There will be minor health disturbances, and annoyance in connection with your job and employees. However, you are on the way to better things, and it is necessary that you continue with your plans and routine with an eye to the definite future you have mapped for yourself. Prepare for petty annoyances and delays. If born between February 6th and 13th, this is an active week for you mentally, socially, and emotionally. You will have to make decisions and the possibility of change in your environment and schedule is imminent. Be careful in making these moves and in the consideration of changes in plans, because later developments will not be according to your expectations, and you are likely to make mistakes in judgment, unless you act in accordance with practical, sound principles.

**February 19th and March 21st**  
(Pisces ♓)

—Pisceans born between February 25th and March 5th will find their emotions subject to upsetting reactions; will have to bear with annoying conditions in connection with domestic, marital, and partnership matters; will be forced to use exceptional judgment along shrewd lines in order to avoid developments of a most undesirable nature. Keep your emotions, speech, temper, and mentality under control. If born between March 6th and 15th, it is necessary for you to keep your heart within bounds, avoiding emotional complications; curb restless impulses, decisions which have not been considered carefully and act in such a way that your judgment will not be responsible for mistakes which will implicate you and confuse your viewpoint. This is an unusually active week, when social affairs and matters concerned with the heart are the predominating factor in your daily life.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MISS R. Y., born December 29, 1917, New York, seven p. m.: Your chart indicates natural business sagacity and perhaps your father is correct in wanting you to enter the ready-to-wear business. It is not an undesirable profession at all, and I advise you to think over his suggestion very carefully. Surely your commercial course which you are studying now can never be



harmful to you, and I believe you will find it most beneficial, no matter what career you choose. You would have made a good teacher, but why not follow your father's advice and give the business proposition a trial? You can always make a change later if you do not like it. Best wishes.

G. O. B., born December 23, 1887, Kansas, between six and six thirty a. m.: Yes, ma'am, your financial worries are about over. In fact, you will have noticed a decided improvement before you read these lines. Take advantage of any opening or of any opportunity which will increase your income. You are operating with better planetary influences than you have had in over three years. This is a splendid year for you if you watch your step and the next best period for you is in 1937.

Miss L. A., born April 3, 1918, Mississippi, twelve fifteen a. m.: You would do well as a modiste or as a beauty specialist. Your chart indicates that you could be successful in either type of work, but my suggestion is to establish yourself as a modiste. In any of the professions you mention it will require hard work and study, but your possibilities to be a good business woman are excellent. No matter what you start, stick to it and finish the job. You are inclined to be vacillating and indecisive.

Mrs. C. B., born March 5, 1888, time unknown: The general positions of your charts indicate that you and your husband might be quite successful in farming. I am unable to be more specific than this because of lack of full data. You folks will make changes and, it is just as you say, the fact that you are working is very gratifying. Your financial affairs will not be as satisfactory this year as you might wish, but this farming idea can be worked into something quite advantageous for you. I would suggest that in any legal negotiations, you should be quite certain of the regularity of all papers; you are likely to be deceived or misled in any legal transactions.

Mr. E. A., Toronto, born December 8, 1891, England: You say you were born "about five fifty-eight," but you neglected to say whether a. m. or p. m. However, the general state of your chart at this time is not so good, and I suggest that you do not

make any changes voluntarily. You may be forced out of your present position, but you should make the best of the situation and remain where you are until October, this year. At that time, your influences will be improved, and it would be safer for you to make important moves and decisions. Your letter interested me very much. Glad to hear from you.

Mr. C. B. B., born January 23, 1882, Texas, around five a. m. By the time you read this it will be fairly safe for you to remarry. I would have advised against it prior to this time. It is quite difficult for me to answer your question concerning the age and the birth date of your future wife. Here is a suggestion, nevertheless. A woman with a birthday between January 15th and 19th would attract you very much, and so would one who was born during the first twenty days in May. As for her age, I am unable to advise you about this, but I can see your point. If you select a young woman, there is a better chance that you will fulfill your desire for a son.

M. R. R., born January 29, 1913, Georgia, nine p. m.: You should not consider marriage this year until around December. You will meet some one then whom you will like very much, but there will probably be delay in connection with heart affairs. The summer months of 1934 are O. K. for you to enter the matrimonial state.

I. F. M., born November 18, 1913, Indiana, one fifteen p. m.: Being born with a "veil" has no significance, as far as I know, unless it makes one very psychic. I know many such cases, and in every instance the person has strongly developed psychic ability. I do not think one could call this a hindrance.

Miss J. B., born December 3, 1905, Pennsylvania, five a. m.: Yes, the chart of the young man born in March is very suitable to yours. I should judge that your marriage will be a very harmonious one, if you folks can keep that fiery temperament both of you have under control most of the time. Best wishes.

Miss G. K. B., born May 24, 1914, Indiana, eight forty-five p. m.: Sorry, young lady, but I think your affair with the Feb-



ruary man is over. Your chart has been under deceptive influences for many months. This man has a very unfavorable year ahead of him.

Mrs. I. C. D.: The question concerning your son, born February 24, 1918, New Jersey, five a. m., interests me very much. He is a strong Piscean character. I do not think he is following the right course of studies, however. His chart shows an adaptability for history, but he is not the type to be enthusiastic about mathematics and languages. As a profession for him, I would suggest photography, geology, botany, and horticulture. I wager he would like natural history. Give him subjects that interest him and he will not be lazy or find schooling so boring. Thank you for your letter. Hope I have been helpful.

### WHY QUESTIONS ARE NOT ANSWERED

MR. J. H. W., September 8, 1893: I do not give personal answers.

Miss D. D., August 1, 1916: Your letter was too vague.

J. P., October 12, 1917: You did not ask a specific question.

Miss M. E. S., December 23, 1908: You did not ask a specific question.

M. M. M., May 10, 1899: Your question was very vague. If you will follow the "Day by Day" and "Born Between—" sections in this department weekly, I am sure they will help you.

**Editor's Note:** Questions for this department are answered only through Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine. Each reader is allowed to ask one question. Be sure to give the following data in your letter: date, month, year, and place of birth, the hour of the day or night, if possible, and sex. Address your letters to KAI, care of this magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.



### MY LOVES

I LOVE the twilight  
On a hill  
That guards  
The sundown sea.

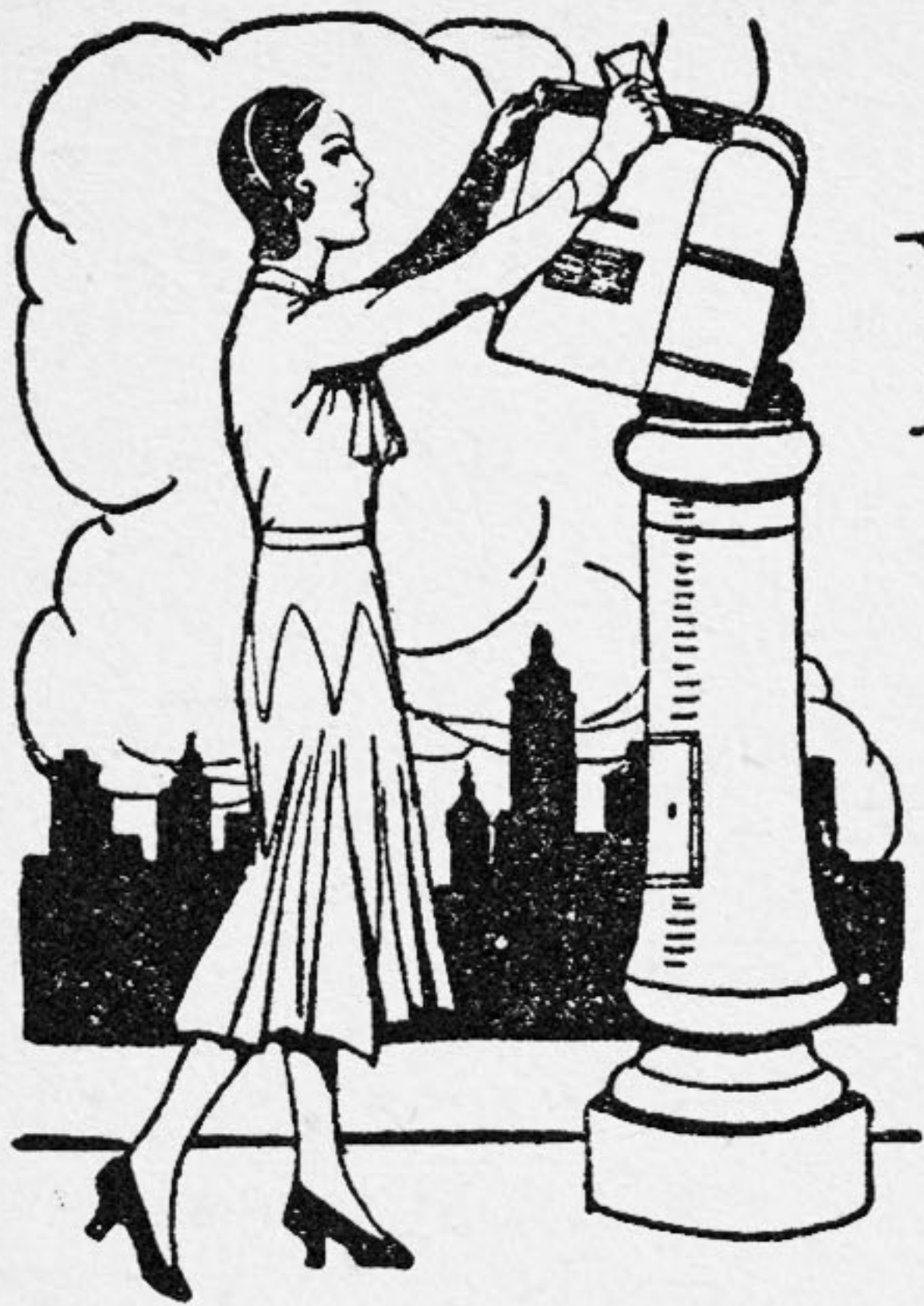
I love a garden  
Lone and still  
That breathes  
Tranquillity.

I love a valley  
With a rill  
That flows  
So peacefully.

I love a cottage  
By a mill  
Where waits  
An ecstasy.

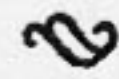
KATHRYN COLE





# The Friendliest Corner

By MARY MORRIS



Miss Morris will help you to  
make friends



Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. All reasonable care will be exercised in the introduction of correspondents. If any unsatisfactory letters are received by our readers, the publishers would appreciate their being sent to them. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

**P**ALS of all ages, rally around and listen to the music of her cowboy band! Little V. J. H. has certainly crowded experiences into her thirteen years of living. Just think of the interesting things she can tell about that Western band of hers, the stories of the stage! She's just a little girl, but her letters are sure to be interesting, and her friendship is sure to be true.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a St. Louis girl of thirteen. I have been on the stage, but most of the time I acted in a cowboy and cowgirl band. I have hazel eyes and brown, wavy hair. I love to sketch, and I spend a lot of time painting. I want to hear from all you true Pals. V. J. H.

This brother and sister put energy into both work and play.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: My brother, who is nineteen, and I, a girl of twenty-one, would like to join your Friendliest Corner. My brother has worked in a garage for three

years, and I have worked in a laundry for several years. We both drive a car; like the radio, reading, the theater, and anything that means a good time. We are just learning to dance. Write to us, one and all. We promise speedy answers.

WORKING PALS OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Theresa's family is lost and scattered.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of fifteen, with wavy, auburn hair and blue eyes. I would like very much to have Pen Pals. I am interested in music. My mother and father are separated; my father is missing, and so are two of my four brothers. I live in the old city of Germantown, Pennsylvania. Pals, how about those letters.

THERESA.

Billy Boy takes a broad view of life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young fellow in need of Pen Pals. I would like to hear from all broad-minded fellows who are interested in the theater, art, and the finer things of life. I am a tall, dark-haired young man. Won't you all drop me a line?

BILLY BOY.



She'll bring you tales of the army.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am very lonesome most of the time, and would like some Pen Pals. I am a young married woman, twenty-one years old. I have been married for only seven months to an army man, and at present my husband is stationed about seventy-five miles from home. I live with my mother, and enjoy writing letters, swimming, horseback riding, and traveling. Married and single girls, won't you write?  
A SOLDIER'S WIFE.

Tomboy Alice makes a hobby of sports.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm looking for Pen Pals. I am fourteen years of age and have blond hair and blue eyes. I'm a girl who's interested in almost every sport, especially in ice skating, swimming, bicycle riding, and football. I suppose I'm a tomboy, too. Girls, send me your letters and snapshots, and I'll send you mine.

TOMBOY ALICE.

This heartbroken ex-nurse is in need of comfort.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Isn't there any one in this wide world who would care to write to a broken-hearted ex-nurse? I have just lost my dearest pal, and now feel as blue as can be. I'm a girl of twenty-one, with red, wavy hair and blue eyes. I've traveled afar and am an expert pianist and violinist. I want loads of Pen Pals, and I offer in return everlasting friendship and loyalty. Please, girls from all over the world, be my friends.  
GYPSY MAID.

Little Bo Peep makes her plea for Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Remember the old nursery rhyme about little Bo Peep losing her sheep? Well, now she's looking for them in the form of Pen Pals. I'm a young girl, a student of commercial work, and I enjoy reading and music to the utmost. Let me find you, Pals!

BO PEEP.

Let her tell you about the desert.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope every one will write to me. I'm a girl, nearing eighteen years of age, five feet two inches tall, with hazel eyes and fiery-red hair. I am

a lover of sports and dancing. Come on, every one; write to a girl who likes good times, lives on the desert, and promises to be a faithful Pal.  
WILLIE.

Here's a discriminating sportsman.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I should like to join your Corner and become acquainted with some Pen Pals. I am a young man attending college, and am interested in music, art, travel, and some sports. I would be especially interested in hearing from Pals in northern Wisconsin, but I'll answer every letter I get. I promise to be an interesting correspondent.  
SUPERIOR JOHN.

Emmeline looks toward the West.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if any girls who live out West on ranches would care to correspond with me. I am a girl, twenty years old, and would like to hear from Pals near my own age. I'm from Chicago. Girls of the West, don't you want to hear about the big city?

EMMELINE.

Iowa Eddie has traveled through the Orient.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please publish my letter in your Friendliest Corner? I am a widower, forty years of age, and have black hair. I am fond of all outdoor sports, dancing, good books, and movies. I have traveled all through Asia, South America, and far-off China. I would like to hear from men between the ages of thirty and forty years, as I have had no one with whom to pass away the lonesome hours since my wife died. I'll answer all letters, from far and near, but I'd prefer hearing from Pals in good old Iowa.

IOWA EDDIE.

Letters would be a blessing to this lonely farm woman.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a lonely twenty-two years-old married woman, live on a farm twenty miles from the nearest town, and have a lot of time to myself, as my husband is away so much. I'll answer all letters I get from old or young, married or single. I have brown hair and blue eyes, am a lover of all sports, and enjoy reading and writing letters. Won't somebody please write to me?

ELNA.



Here's a girl with newspaper ambitions.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will every one interested in writing as a career please write me? I am a girl, eighteen years old, and am interested in newspaper work. I also like to read, swim, and travel. Besides that, I am a rather good housekeeper, as I have been my father's housekeeper for the past seven years. Please, some one or every one, write. I'm awfully lonesome.

MISS HOOEY.

Dixie and Cupid hail from the sunny South.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you any box seats left for two sixteen-year-old, fun-loving girls from the Big Bend State? Cupid is blond, blue-eyed, and has a round face, while Dixie has black, curly hair, brown eyes, and a pointed face. We love dancing, swimming, and camping. We also like good literature, have written a few stories and poems, and are editors of a paper in our school. Pen Pals, why not send a letter down to Tennessee?

DIXIE AND CUPID.

Hear about life in a small hotel.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you get me some Pen Pals? I live in a small town, so naturally I get lonely and have lots of time to write. I help my sister manage a small hotel, and as I stay home every other evening I'd enjoy having Pen Pals to write to. I'm a young woman of twenty-six, have dark-brown hair and gray-green eyes, and have always been popular with both sexes. I'd especially like some Pen Pals from the South, as I once lived in Georgia. Pals, if you'll write, I'll tell you something about old Mexico.

KANSAS BET.

Long Island Peg has personality and pep.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I've got some extra energy which must be used up; therefore I want some Pen Pals. I'm rather popular, but have a lot of spare time to devote to Pen Pals. I'm a girl of seventeen, with brown, wavy hair, gray-blue eyes, and fair skin. People say I have a pleasing personality. Anyway, I'll try to make my letters as interesting as possible, so come on, girls. I enjoy sports, dancing, reading, and writing.

LONG ISLAND PEG.

This Russian girl has had adventures.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonely Russian girl, fifteen years old. I'm a junior in high school, and am captain of the basket-ball team. I like tennis, dancing, music, snapshot collecting, and hiking. I've had many adventures, and would like especially to hear from girls living in either New York City or the West.

CAPTAIN JENNIE.

She'll tease you into good humor.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Now that my sister is married, I have no one to tease, so I'm looking for a Pen Pal. I'm a girl of fourteen, with brown, curly hair and blue eyes. Come on, every one, write to me. I'll cheer you up. I'm interested mostly in sports and the West.

CHICAGO TEASE.

Outdoor Pals, write to this boy of the hills.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am just a lonesome country boy. My hobbies are hunting, fishing, trapping, and horseback riding. I also like to be in the hills where there is timber. I'm sixteen, and have black hair and brown eyes. I want to hear from all Pen Pals, especially those in Alaska, Texas, Montana, and Canada. Come on, boys!

YAKIMA KID.

At twenty-one, Rambler is a widow.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of twenty-one, a widow, and am lonesome for a real Pal. I am very fond of dancing, reading, writing, hiking, swimming, and card playing. I'd surely like to hear from girls living in Los Angeles, but letters from anywhere will be appreciated. Mail in my mail box is always a pleasant surprise. I am looking forward to receiving many letters.

RAMBLER.

Earl has had a hard life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man, twenty-nine years old, interested in almost anything, but I have had a lot of misfortunes, and am indeed lonesome for some good, true-blue friends and Pals. I'd especially like to hear from fellows living in remote corners of the world—the Northwest Mounted men and the marines—but a letter from any one will be more than welcome.

EARL.



This Southern girl loves good fun.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you publish my plea for Pen Pals? I live way down South where the cotton blossoms blow. I'm a girl, five feet six inches tall, and have brown, wavy hair and gray eyes. I like anything that's good fun. Come on, girls; we'll call it a dare. Who'll take up the challenge?

SOUTH CAROLINA BOOTS.

Columbine Brunette speaks Spanish.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I enter your Corner? I am a girl, fifteen years old, with brown, wavy hair and brown eyes. I am interested in Spanish and all outdoor sports. I can speak Spanish and would like to hear from Spanish and Mexican girls, but all are welcome. I will answer all letters received, so come on, girls, answer this plea.

COLUMBINE BRUNETTE.

A movie fan from the State of cowboys and rodeos.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am fourteen years of age, a Montana girl with blond hair and brown eyes. I love to receive letters, and always answer them promptly. I am fond of dancing, shows, and have a large collection of movie stars' pictures. Don't fail me, girls! Send a letter to Montana!

PAULINE MARY.

Traveling and cooking are Tillie's chief interests.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would love to have Pen Pals from all over the world, especially from Alaska. I have always longed to travel, but so far have never been able to. I am a West Virginia girl, twenty-four years of age, fond of reading and outdoor sports. My hobby is cooking. I will answer all letters received.

TILLIE.

Crooner's voice has traveled over the air.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Pen Pals everywhere, especially those in the Eastern States, is there one among you who would care to write to a true-blue friend? I have had lots of experience in radio broadcasting and would like to write about it. I'm a young man of twenty-four, one of those crooners who are so unjustly criticized by

our best radio columnists. I'm interested in all sports, especially baseball, and am very fond of the theater. Please, Pals, give your pens something to do. Write to me, everybody!

CROONER.

This New York girl loves the great outdoors.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please help me in my quest for Pals. I am a girl, fourteen years old, and have light-brown hair and blue eyes. Camping, canoeing, going to the movies, and dancing are my favorite pastimes. I will gladly exchange photographs with any one. I want all girls of my age to write to me!

NEW YORK CANOEIST.

She indulges in almost every sport.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl, seventeen years old, and have brown hair and eyes. I was born in Rockford, Illinois, have traveled all over Europe, and now live in Melrose Park. I like reading, swimming, tennis, golf, dancing, and horseback riding. I am very lonesome in the evenings, and would like to have Pen Pals.

SPORT-LOVING ANNA.

Who'll cheer this nurse who's used to cheering others?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think you could possibly find room for me? I'm dreadfully in need of some one to write to. I'm a nurse, a girl of twenty, with brown hair and eyes. I'm interested in anything and every one. I'll write to all of you, and will gladly answer all questions about hospital life. I'd love to hear from the South, but every one is welcome!

NURSE LILLYAN.

Iowa Cornstalk's Pals must be loyal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please enter my plea for Pen Pals in your Friendliest Corner? I am a girl, fifteen years of age, have brown hair and blue eyes, and my hobbies are writing letters, hiking, reading, and dancing. I would be pleased to hear from Pals between the ages of fourteen and sixteen—that is, provided that they are of the lasting variety. I want loyal Pals, and I would be especially pleased to hear from girls from California.

IOWA CORNSTALK.



Would-be writers, she's ready with encouragement.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am as lonely as it is possible for any one to be. I'd surely love to have a few Pen Pals. I'm a young woman of thirty, love to read, and my ambition is to be a writer. I have had a few acceptances, and I'd particularly like to hear from Pen Pals with similar ambitions. Won't some of you please write?

EVANSTON WRITER.

All she asks of a Pal is faithfulness.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of sixteen, with dark-brown, wavy hair and brown eyes. I play the piano and piano accordion, tap dance and sing, and am very much interested in hearing from Pen Pals from everywhere. I will be glad to exchange snapshots, and hope to make life-long friendships through your Corner.

KANSAS KID.

Indiana Warren has a taste for the stage.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd like to hear from artists or from fellows who have traveled and are dramatically inclined. Age, personal appearance, and religion are of no importance. The writer is a young man looking for an interesting, live correspondent. Come on, boys and men of New York, Detroit, and Chicago, write to

INDIANA WARREN.

This small-town girl is lost in loneliness.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of nineteen, living in a country town, the loneliest place on earth, it seems. I have brown hair and eyes, am five feet two inches tall, and weigh one hundred and eighteen pounds. Won't some one please take pity on me and write?

DOLOROUS.

Here's another lover of good times.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm interested in getting a few Pen Pals, and I hope you have room for me in your Corner. I am nineteen years old, a girl who enjoys good times. I like to write letters and am interested in football and basket ball. Come on, girls! Keep your letters coming in, and I will answer every one I receive. CLARA LOU.

This young mother is still going to school.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am very lonely, and would love to hear from every one who will write. I am a married woman of twenty-one, with a small son. I am not living with my husband, but am taking up a business course. I have brown hair and blue eyes, and my favorite pastimes are dancing, reading, and swimming. Won't some one write to me?

SALLY OF KNIGHTS LANDING.

Send a letter across the blue Pacific.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of sixteen, with brown hair and gray eyes, and I am five feet tall. My hobbies are horse-back riding, swimming, games, and dancing. I live out in the country in the Philippines, eighteen miles from the city, and I'm very lonesome, for we have no neighbors. I hope to hear from any new Pals soon.

PACIFIC IRENE.

This shut-in knows the meaning of friendship.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: You have helped me several times in getting Pen Pals. Now I want some more. I am an invalid, a girl of twenty-two, have dark-brown, bobbed, wavy hair, and gray eyes. I am noted for my long and interesting letters. All you girls who want a true-blue Pal, write to me.

DOROTHY OF MINNESOTA.

Hear about her little Canadian town.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl, fifteen years old, and would like to have Pen Pals. I have dark, wavy hair and dark-blue eyes. I'm fond of swimming, skating, skiing, and dancing, and I'd love to hear from girls of all ages and from everywhere. All my life I have lived in a tiny village in Ontario, so I can tell all about it. Girls, I'll answer every letter and make my replies as interesting as possible.

SOAPSUDS.

Pals, write to this little Kentucky thoroughbred.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I come into your Corner? I'm a happy girl of sixteen, but still, sometimes I'm lonesome. I'd love to have plenty of Pen Pals to keep me busy.



I promise to answer all letters and tell about my little town in Kentucky.

DOROTHA.

He prefers books to women.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May a Canadian bachelor of twenty-nine appeal for Pen Pals? I have traveled in Europe and the United States. I am fond of reading and like to write letters, but I am not fond of girls. I'll answer all letters and exchange snapshots.

MONTREALER.

This truck driver has led an interesting life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am looking for Pen Pals from all over. I am a young man, twenty years of age, and have light-brown hair. I drive a truck and do odd jobs around a fish-packing house. I have driven trucks to Buffalo and Chicago. The sports I like best are boating, swimming, and fishing. I hope I get a lot of Pen Pals, as I have lots of time to write to them.

POWELL.

She's Hollywood bound!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a very happy girl and get everything I ask for. I am still going to school, and live with my parents. We play cards at night and go to many dances. My favorite pastimes are singing on Sundays in church, swimming, tennis, skating, skiing, and baseball. I am also crazy about the movies, and hope soon to go to Hollywood and see many of the stars.

SHERRY OF CANADA.

This titian-haired Pal should prove interesting to you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think any Pen Pals would want to write to a little lonesome girl in Pennsylvania? I am sixteen years old, five feet three, with Titian hair and brown eyes. My hobbies are reading and music. Come on, you girls, and write. I would like to write to girls in the North and West, but I'll answer all letters.

SHARON RUTH.

Hi-de-ho thrills to modern rhythms.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young colored girl in junior high school. I'm fourteen years old, and would like to exchange photographs. I'm fond of jazz music and stage dancing, especially tap, and hope to be on the stage soon. I hope I get loads of letters and snapshots.

HI-DE-HO.

Boys, don't you want to hear more about College Junior?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Are there any young men in your Corner who are interested in everything and everybody? If so, I'd certainly like to hear from them. I'm a young man of twenty-three, but I'll save further description for those who write. I think that I can amuse and interest any Pal who'll do the same for me.

COLLEGE JUNIOR.

She'll tell about the State of oil wells and Indians.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't some of you girls write to a lonely Oklahoma girl. I am fourteen years old, with black, wavy hair and brown eyes. I would like to hear from girls the world over. I love dancing, horseback riding, and basket ball. Girls, let me tell you all about Oklahoma.

MOETIA.

A working girl with a taste for philosophy.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to correspond with Pen Pals whose interests would correspond with mine. My hobby is research. I am interested in philosophy, poetry, religion, and logic, and naturally desire to exchange the opinions and knowledge derived from these studies with others who enjoy discussing worth-while things. Though disinclined to mix with people, I place a sincere value upon friendship and friends. My age is twenty-three, and I am just another working girl. I'll be glad to hear from any one of you Pals.

A STUDENT.





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# THE FRIEND IN NEED

Department Conducted by

Laura Alston Brown

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

Although Mrs. Brown receives more letters than she can possibly print in the department, she answers all the others by mail. So, lay your problem before her with the knowledge that it will have her full attention.

Address Mrs. Laura Alston Brown, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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**H**AS a girl a chance to make up for a mistake? Can she win back her place in the world? Is it possible for her to regain the high esteem of others that she once cherished, to feel she is again a worth while person who is entitled to some happiness, or must she remain adrift on the often stormy seas of life, her heart filled with painful regrets, her mind never free from the fear of discovery?

Coming back, it would seem, is in some instances hard work, especially when others refuse to stretch out a friendly helping hand. Sometimes even when a girl makes a sincere effort to forget a slip, to build her life along lines of right living after a mistake, as in Desperate's case, she meets with nothing but cold unkindness on the part of the world.

But don't you, dear readers, think that any girl who has taken the wrong turn can make a real comeback?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am in desperate trouble, and you are the only one I dare ask for advice.

I will be nineteen years old next month. About eight months ago I met a young

man with whom I fell in love. He told me he was very fond of me.

Dick and I went together steadily for four months, and then, Mrs. Brown, I made what I now know was a big mistake. I forgot to remember conventions, and gave all that love demanded. He promised that some day soon, when he was financially able to take care of me, we would be married. I loved him so madly that I was content to wait.

However, I soon began to hear various stories about Dick and another girl, that he had jilted her, and had gone with her in the first place only because she gave him so much. I grew frightened, although I didn't say anything to him about my feelings, and did not let him know I had heard about this other girl.

Then, much as I loved him, I changed somehow, and grew to hate him. One day I told him all I'd heard; he didn't deny it. I told him then I never wanted to see him again. He said, "All right, if that's the way you feel about it, but you'll be sorry."

That was several months ago.

Last week my girl friend heard some stories about me. It seems that Dick told some friends of mine about our former love affair, and said I wasn't good enough for any man. It's driving me crazy, Mrs. Brown. What can I do? Why should he think he is better than I?

I am going out with some nice young men in our town, and if they ever heard a whisper, I think I would do something desperate. My parents would just about dis-



own me if they knew the truth. Hasn't a girl any chance to make up for a mistake, when she wants to go straight?

Please tell me what to do. Shall I go to Dick's mother, tell her the whole story, and ask her to make Dick stop talking about me?

DESPERATE.

Go to Dick's mother and make matters worse for yourself? No, my child, that would not benefit you, I'm afraid. What you can do, now that you are wiser for your experience, is to ignore and deny everything. If any gossip does reach your ears, you can hint that because you broke off with Dick, he wants to be revenged, and so has adopted the methods of a cad.

Instead of hanging your head, hold it high; if you deny anything that has been broadcast, it will be his word against yours. And who will prove that you are wrong and he is right?

When a girl realizes that disregarding conventions is not as much fun as it might have seemed and tries hard to make a new start, don't you think she is entitled to another chance, family?

If any one of you readers has made a successful comeback, won't you please write in and help prove that it can be done, and that it is worth while?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am in despair; please advise me what to do. Before I was married I never went out with other men, never cared for parties. I came to this city four years ago, and met a man who seemed to change my ideas entirely. We went out a lot, but never to a party or dance, as I never cared for them. We either went out to see my parents in my home town, forty-eight miles away, or went to the movies.

After two years and a half we were married. His mother hates me, and always objected to his going with me. She knew nothing of our marriage until my husband started packing his things in order to move from her house to our own little apartment.

I was so happy those first three months! Then hard luck seemed to follow. My husband lost his job; we had to leave our little apartment, and live with his sister. It's not quite a year since I was married, but in the last six months I have cried more than I ever did in my life.

My husband has seemed to change since we came to live with his sister, who lives upstairs, while his mother stays downstairs. His mother owns the house. He helped her to rebuild it, telling me that he expected to be paid for it, although I am positive he will never get a cent.

I went out and did housework for three dollars a week. Out of this I gave his sister a dollar a week for board. I got my meals where I worked, while my husband had his with his mother. Every time I came home, I found my husband downstairs with his mother. Some nights I came home at twelve or one o'clock. He didn't seem to care that I came home so late, alone, though at first he called for me.

I am so miserable that I could cry my eyes out. I was terribly afraid to walk that distance alone; it took me about thirty-five minutes to get home. Last night I came home at twelve thirty and found my husband asleep. I was so miserable, but I didn't complain. This morning, however, I called up the place where I worked and told them that I quit.

What I wanted to know is this: was I right in giving up my job? Do you think now that I won't get my meals, and won't pay for the room, my husband will try to find a job himself and will take me away from here? I hope so. Sometimes I feel like leaving him and going away, but in my heart I know I love him. I know he would not be this way if he did not spend so much time with his mother.

She tells him things about me which are untrue. She tries her best to break us up, and I hate to give her a chance. I hate to give up, hoping that I'll win at the end, and that my husband's eyes will open, and he will see what I suffer.

ANXIOUS.

I really can't say whether or not you were wise to give up your job, but perhaps it will spur your husband on to further job-hunting. I quite agree with you that you should not give up so easily where your marriage is concerned. If you possibly can, dear, try not to show how much your husband's attitude to-



ward you hurts you. Try to avoid weeping; tears are not always as effective a weapon as they are supposed to be. Be cheerful and friendly instead, so that he will not be bored, and will be glad to spend more of his free time with you.

Another thing, my dear, you might try to do something you don't want to—try to win his mother over, and be better friends with your sister-in-law. Show them that you are willing to do your share to avoid fuss and friction, and that you'd like to make things agreeable for all of you. There's no reason why you should leave, especially if you love your husband. I'm sure he cares for you, but marriage and his mother's ideas have no doubt bewildered him to such an extent that he seems changed. Be patient. You've more to win than lose, if you stay.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: "It is faith in something, enthusiasm for something, that makes life worth living." I just turned on my radio and those were the words which came to my ears. Aren't they true?

I turned to your department to while away a few minutes, and the very first thing I saw was a letter from a red-haired school-teacher. She jumped all over a poor creature who signed himself An Average Man.

I have not read his letter, but it must have been good to get such a rise out of An Average Woman. I really got quite a kick out of it. She asks whether men expect a sweetheart or a scrubwoman.

Let me tell you a little about a very busy woman's life. It is now eleven thirty p. m. I will give you a description of my average day. To-day I did the family laundry for five members, cleaned the house, prepared three meals, and devoted four hours to a law course which I am taking. That is just an average day for me. To-morrow I will iron, but my day will be very much as it was to-day.

I design and make all my own and my six-year-old daughter's clothes, and I have about ten or twelve very smart, complete outfits. I am presiding officer of a county organization to which I belong, with seven units under my supervision, which I am

required to visit once every six weeks. I'm secretary of another club that meets twice a month, musician of a lodge which meets every week, and coach of a dramatic club. Aside from that, I have a boy thirteen and a girl six to whom I devote considerable time, and I devote on an average of twenty hours a week to my law course. How is that for a busy woman?

It always amuses me to read about these poor, downtrodden women whose husbands are compelled to look at them in a soiled house dress, or over a piled-up dining-room table, because the day was all too short to accomplish everything.

There are so many interesting things to occupy one's time that I fail to see any reason why a woman should spend all her time trying to please her lord and master. My husband is pleased to spend his spare moments with me, and I devote on an average of five evenings a week to my family, but I have other interests, too. I do all of my own housework, and my husband's salary, after the slashes of the past two years, is one hundred dollars a month.

Oh, yes, I forget to tell you, I shampoo and finger wave my own hair and manicure my nails once a week.

You see, it is really remarkable what a woman can do and still keep herself presentable and her husband interested, if she has the ambition.

I am not trying to set myself up as a shining example, but perhaps some poor soul will read this and take a new lease on life.

I am looking forward to the time when I won't have all these everyday duties to perform, but just now I'm a general utility "man." And the overwhelming part of it is, I'm happy and so is my entire family.

A READER.

Your letter leaves a person fairly breathless, my dear. However, more power to you! You are as busy as a bee, and have no time for those irritating little kinks that annoy others so much. Ambition and the desire to work can perform more wonders than one might believe. Carry on, my dear! I'm sure you will never regret your hard work.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I can't help but join in the argument. Whether or not a husband should help his wife with her housework, and whether a modern woman



has too little or too much to occupy her time depends entirely on the circumstances.

A normal, healthy woman, with normal, healthy children, who lives in a balanced environment with the aid of modern mechanical conveniences, or with part of the work sent out, should be able to do her work and have time to spare. This, however, is only under ideal conditions, and not the rule.

What of the woman with a sickly baby, in ill health herself, with few or no modern conveniences, and no work sent out? Surely no one can see any harm if the husband, who is on the job only eight or nine hours, helps his wife in any way he can!

Relaxation can be gotten merely from a change of occupation. Then taking care of his children after his business hours is a relaxation for daddy—and what a relaxation for mother! Every child needs both parents. If a child is to derive any benefit from having a father, the father must give some of his time to the job of parenthood, besides making a living.

The old story of "mother raised nine children and did so and so," looked at from a modern angle is a joke. In the good old days a bath for each member of the family, and a clean set of clothing every Saturday was the rule. The modern brood is bathed daily, and requires fresh clothing each day.

Nice dark-gray or red-plaid blankets were put on our mother's beds each fall, and there they stayed until spring. The color was chosen because it didn't show dirt. The modern bedding is washed as often in winter as in summer.

In the large families of the past there was always an older child who cared for the younger, washed the dishes, and helped to wash, iron, and cook. Nowadays, the mother usually has to do it all.

My argument is that a woman needs help according to her burden, and this is an individual problem in every home.

MOTHER EVA.

Mother Eva seems to have covered the subject pretty thoroughly, although we will no doubt hear from more interested readers who think, as some do, that a husband should not be asked to help around the house after business hours. Does Mother Eva's letter hit the spot, family?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a new member of your family of readers, and believe you can help me.

I have been married three years, and am the father of a boy eighteen months old. I think the world of the baby and my wife, but here's the trouble.

Four months after we married, my job went under because the firm closed down. It was a great disappointment to me, as we were just getting started and had made a fairly large down payment on some nice furniture. We lost all that when I couldn't find steady work and could not keep up the payments. I could find only about one day's work a week. We went to live with my mother. She has a house of her own and a little money, and she certainly did want to help us. I gave my wife all the money I made.

Then I found more work and for a couple of months I made more than forty dollars a week. While I held this job, my wife didn't fail to send her mother some money every week. Finally, when I lost that job, too, I began to protest about sending away money which we needed badly. My wife thought I wasn't a bit fair, but her mother is a young woman yet, and is quite able to support herself. I've known her to turn down jobs because my wife helped her.

Then my mother bought a small business. Since then I have been working for her on a salary. We had everything we needed. I suppose I shouldn't blame my wife for complaining because we were still living in my mother's house, but I think we had no real reason to be dissatisfied.

The other day, when I was out making deliveries, my wife packed up and left, taking the baby with her. I don't think she did the fair thing, do you, Mrs. Brown? One reason why she left was because I wouldn't give her what little money we had to send to her mother. My mother never had any words with my wife; mother always said she didn't think in-laws should mix in, and she stuck to it.

I babied my wife and did the best I could at all times to make her happy, but she wasn't satisfied. The breaks have been against us, but we aren't the only ones. I will have a steady job next month. Do you think I should write to my wife, ask her to come back, and tell her we can have a home of our own again? If we should make up, I think it's her turn to make the first move. She didn't have to leave, but she is the sort of girl who thinks the other person should say he is sorry, even when it is her fault.



I used to give my wife every penny I made, because she knows how to save, and I never abused her in any way. But whenever I didn't baby her, she thought she was being badly treated. I hate to think my marriage is going on the rocks, especially since I am not to blame. Shall I send her money for the baby? I don't see why I should support her mother, and I know if I send my wife some money, she will give it to her mother.

Please don't tell me to have a heart-to-heart talk with her, because I've already tried it without success. My wife thinks all my suggestions are just so much hot air. She hums while I try to reason with her, and won't talk to me. What shall I do? I want to be fair. MISUNDERSTOOD.

Since you've already had a heart-to-heart talk, and your wife refuses to listen to reason, perhaps you shouldn't waste time on mere conversation. If things are as you say, and she has had no reason for leaving except that you didn't want her to send her mother money because her mother can support herself, then it's time for a little action.

Instead of trying to make her listen to you, be a bit cool. Send money for the child, if you wish, but don't ask your wife to return to you or listen to your plans; let her make up her mind to do one or both without your coaxing. Sometimes silence is more persuasive.

You will have to be patient, of course, but if your wife loves you at all and finds that you are not going to be an easy mark, she will realize her mistake, I'm sure, and come back to you. If she doesn't, she's a mighty foolish young woman. We can't be babied all our lives, and sooner or later reality has to be faced. Don't you agree with me, Misunderstood?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am just another girl who ought to be able to solve her own problems, but I am at a loss to know what I should do.

I am eighteen years of age, considered good-looking, and hold a responsible posi-

tion in an office, so naturally I am very particular about my appearance. I enjoy all sports, and don't indulge in smoking, drinking, or petting.

It might be a good idea to give you a brief description of my two sweethearts before I state my problem. My first steady, whom I shall call Herb, is a blond, a marvelous pianist, and a very ambitious boy. He is rather innocent because he was closely watched by his parents while in high school. The second steady, Ted, is known as an experienced man, and is very handsome. He comes from a family of good financial standing and is spoiled.

Herb had been my steady boy friend for eighteen months, when I learned he was not telling me the truth. Well, the only thing left for me to do was to call off the affair and part as friends. He went with other girls, and I went with other boys. I was only sixteen when this love affair started. Then I went to a dance with my girl friend, and met Ted. We started seeing each other quite often, and the first thing we knew we thought we were in love. After we had been going together for a few months, he suddenly surprised me by saying that we couldn't go steady any longer. This statement, I will admit, hit me hard, but instead of forgetting me entirely, he now calls up the office two or three times a week, and in the evening about once. He must still have some affection for me, and I am willing to admit that I am still in a daze over him.

I just can't understand it, but he said it was best to part now instead of making it harder later on. He is going out with other girls, and I have been going out with other boys, but I am jealous when I think he is with another girl. I know that he still loves me, but he told a boy that I was getting restless, and this always led into some argument, and that it was better to part.

Now that I have tried to explain just how everything has been, here is my problem: Do you think Ted can still love me after he gave me up so easily? I am not exactly sure whether it is love on my part or not, but I do know I miss him. Herb wants to come back, but I don't know whether or not to let him. I have gone with two different boys of opposite types, and still I got a raw deal out of it. I played the game fairly, but I guess that is generally how it turns out. The girl gets the air. Would you take Herb back if you were I?

I haven't much faith left in any man now; I guess it will be just a happy-go-



lucky life for me, unless something mighty powerful changes my opinion of the opposite sex.

I won't trouble you any longer, but please tell me if it would be wise to wait for Ted or go with Herb. I am so puzzled. I'm fond of Ted, but I admire Herb a great deal, too.

LONESOME DELLA.

Why waste time waiting for Ted? If he loved you, he wouldn't have engineered a break with a flimsy excuse. Why let a boy break your heart when you don't really love him? Forget Ted, honey.

As for Herb, if he told you an untruth once, he is apt to do so again, although if you really like him you might take him back as nothing more than a casual friend on your own terms. The best thing for you to do, dear, is to go out with other boys, and forget these two who have caused you unhappiness. Happiness isn't over for you by any means. Don't get cynical. There are many men in the world who treat women with respect and consideration, and there are a great many years ahead of you in which, I'm sure, you'll find a man whom you can love without sorrow.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I simply must tell you how much reading your department has helped me. I am not coming to you for advice, but just to tell you that I always read your department and find it very interesting and a big help.

I have had a tough time in my life, have been over many a rough road, but I held on until the road finally became smooth.

Now I am very happily married and have a darling little boy. I was married when I was seventeen. I am twenty-two now, but look more like seventeen. How I keep my youth, I don't understand. I have been through enough to make me an old woman. All I want now is a nice home all to myself, and I hope that will be soon; I am living with my people at present.

I read The Owl's letter and would like to say a few words to him.

I agree with the first part of your letter, Owl. I do not think a girl should kiss fellows the first time she goes out with

them, or be too friendly with them, either. But in the last part of your letter, Mr. Owl, I think you are wrong. In your estimation, all girls are silly and sentimental. Well, I'm here to say they are not all like that. I'll admit a lot of them are, but why couldn't you have said "some girls," or "most girls," instead of "all girls?" I don't like to see girls act silly, or sentimental, or easy-going, or "easy to make," as you say they are. That isn't my idea of a nice girl. I know I'm not silly or sentimental, and I know you will find there are many girls who think as I do.

So all girls make you sick, do they? And you are not going to marry until you are forty! Well, we'll see about that. You will come across a girl some day who will change all your views on love, women, and romance, and I hope it will be soon.

Dear Mrs. Brown, I suppose you think I am an old-fashioned arguer, but I'm not. I am nice to every one, and like all up-to-date things and all sports. I simply had to tell The Owl how wrong he was.

I won't say, "May I call again?" I'll just say, "I will come again," because you have so often told us we are welcome.

Good luck to your department, and thank you for listening to me.

PEG.

Thanks so much for your letter, Peg, and I do hope you will write again. Most certainly every one is welcome!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Perhaps you can help me with my problem. I hope so.

I've been in love with a girl for over two years and I'm sure she has loved me, too. Recently, another girl came into my life. This new girl is an orphan, and I became friendly with her merely out of sympathy. I like her, but I love the other girl.

Here's the trouble: My first girl ended our romance because she thought I was paying too much attention to the second girl. I tried to explain that this girl meant nothing to me and that we were only friends, but as she has the wrong idea about the situation, we broke up.

What would you advise me to? I love the girl I first mentioned, and don't want to lose her. We planned to marry next June, but I suppose this means anything but a wedding.

BLUE BOY.

You might do two things, my boy. Either make one last, desperate at-



tempt to explain that the new girl means nothing to you, and hope your ex-fiancée will take your word for it—she should, of course, since it is the truth—or else forget her. You know, Blue Boy, even though being nice to the new girl was nothing more than a gesture of sympathy on your part, you were an engaged man and, as such, you might have been more cautious and left other girls strictly alone when it came to dates.

If your ex-fiancée won't listen to you, how about asking her parents to coöperate with you? Perhaps they could influence her to listen to you, to believe you, to forget what happened, and go on with the wedding plans. Don't give up all hope. You know the old saying: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl of twenty-two. About three years ago an assistant pastor came to our church, and we became very much interested in each other. It wasn't love at first sight on my part, but after six months of friendship I found I was in love.

Allen has been in this country only a few years. He is clever and bright, and really a desirable young man. However, all my relatives, and my immediate family, too, disapprove of him.

His salary, of course, is not a banker's, but we could get along. Mother has skimped all her life, and says she doesn't want to see me follow in her steps. I can understand her point in taking this attitude, but do I have to pass up real love just because my sweetheart is not wealthy, and because my folks don't like him?

I am sure he loves me; no one could take that belief away from me, no matter what happened.

Not one of my relatives or friends can find anything else to hold against him, but they insist on saying he is not good enough for me. It hurts me to hear that, and I am beginning to dislike those who say it. My own sister said she would never speak to me again if I married this man.

Several months ago Allen left our town to serve in a church in a near-by city. We have been corresponding daily. In a re-

cent letter he said that if we should ever break up, he would leave the country, most likely for a foreign mission.

Here is my big problem, Mrs. Brown. I am unable to make up my mind whether I should marry Allen and disregard my family and friends' opinion, or let Allen go and wait until I find a man of whom they'd approve. Do you think that if Allen and I did not see or write to each other for a year or less, we could be sure later on whether or not we should go on fighting our way through? He says that he can't bear to think of a separation and that my letters are helping him to keep alive the hope that some day we will marry and find happiness together.

I'm afraid to make a break, because if he should go away, I might find out that I love him enough to give up every one for him, and then it would be too late. He said if he stands between me and my family, he is willing to step aside, but only I can realize what that would mean to him.

My mind is in a whirl; I'm at a loss as to which way to turn. Mother often says that I shall be ashamed of him. All my relatives believe they are "somebody," and when I think of the future, I can't help wondering if perhaps they are right. Isn't something wrong somewhere? Should I give up all my friends and relations for this one man? Will he be able to make up for them all if we marry?

I can't possibly go on like this much longer. What would some of your readers do if they were in my place?

A WESTERN SWEETHEART.

You ask: "Isn't something wrong somewhere?" Well, isn't it, honey? Don't you think your main trouble lies in the fact that you are not sure of your love for this man? Where there is real love, there is no room for doubt, my dear.

Why not frankly admit that you are uncertain, and ask him to give you a few months' time in which to decide? I'm sure that when a man loves, he will not refuse to wait. And once you decide you love him, you will give up anything to marry him.

As for your family and friends, if they have no specific objections to your friend, you'll forgive me if I



say their attitude is somewhat snobbish.

What would you do, girls, if you were in A Western Sweetheart's place?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Here I am again, and I hope you will remember me. I wrote to you about a year ago to ask for some much needed advice. Now I am asking for some advice again. I am sure you can help me, and I will do as you suggest.

I am twenty-two years old, and have been married twice, but it seems as if I just couldn't make a go of married life. Something always happens.

The first time I married I was just a child of fifteen, and I was not ready to settle down. Naturally, that marriage didn't last very long. The boy I married at that time was older than I, and I am sure that was another thing that was wrong then.

I was eighteen when I married the second time. The young man was about my own age, but in this case he wasn't ready to settle down, and after trying to make a go of it for over four years, we broke up. Now I am free again.

I'll admit it was partly my fault in both cases, but not entirely, as I really did try the last time. I was quite fond of my second husband, and still am in a way. He was sweet and good to me sometimes, but he is very quick-tempered, and did not treat me very well. That was why I finally got the divorce.

What I want to know now is this: I am going with a fellow who is my own age. I have known him for seven years, and have loved him for a long time. I am sure he loves me, too. I have had a number of chances in the last seven years to marry him, but something always happened to prevent our marriage.

I was angry at him both times I was married. Of course, I regretted my marriages after I had thought things over, but then it was too late.

I have had another chance lately to marry him, but I refused to for the present, anyway. Mrs. Brown, I am afraid to marry him. I am afraid it would turn out as the other two marriages did. I couldn't stand that, as I love him better than any one in the world.

He isn't going to wait for me forever, and I don't expect him to. He has gone with some very nice girls, and has tried to forget me, but he says he can't, because he loves only me.

I also have tried my best to forget him, but I can't. He lives about two hundred and fifty miles away, and I don't see him very often, but we correspond regularly. However, I can't make up my mind about marrying him.

Mrs. Brown, please tell me what to do about this. Shall I go ahead and marry him, and take a chance that it will last, or shall I refuse to marry him and try to forget him entirely?  
CLEO.

Why all the frantic effort to forget each other? You love him, and he loves you and wants to marry you; then why not get together on this and take a chance? Marriage, at best, is always a gamble, my dear. Despite two failures, your third attempt might prove very successful and bring you real happiness. The fact that you love this man so much more than you did either of the two men you married is a good omen, don't you think?

The best of luck to you both, my dear!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have read Love Story magazine several years and have seen how you have helped others. I hope you can advise me what to do, too.

I am a young girl of twenty-two, and never have had any one to advise me what was right or what was wrong. I have been keeping company with a young man five years older than I. We were engaged, and planned to marry this fall, but when he found out I was to become the mother of his child, he gave up his job and left for his home State. He told his best friend that he was going to marry me, but that was five months ago, and I have not seen or heard from him since.

Mrs. Brown, should I go to his parents and tell them my story? I cannot work, and I have no money to take care of myself.  
UNFORTUNATE RAY.

I see no reason why you should hesitate to tell your fiancé's parents that he must marry you. You should have done that months ago. Get in touch with his parents, dear, or call on them in person, if you can, and tell them exactly how things stand.



If his parents refuse to do anything about it or to help you in any way, and you have no family of your own, please get in touch with me at once, and I will be happy to give you names and addresses of welfare organizations in your vicinity where you can obtain some assistance.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been a reader of Love Story Magazine and of your department for many years, and enjoy all of it. I am not seeking advice. I want to say a few words to those who are in pain of one kind or another.

"Forget it; you'll be all right." These are great words. I have found courage to laugh at what I have gone through and am still going through. I am a young man of twenty, fond of swimming, dancing, reading, and most of all, baseball.

Five months ago, while playing baseball, I was hit on the head by a ball, and knocked out for ten minutes or more. An X ray showed a slight fracture of the skull. I was paying attention to one ball and was hit by another. If people were careful, accidents like this would never happen, would they?

Anyway, the doctor ordered me to stay home for six or eight weeks. I took it for granted that after eight weeks of good rest I would be all right. However, toward the end of that time, I had a terrible spell, and the chances were the I would be paralyzed, but I never lost hope.

That was more than five months ago, and although I still feel a throbbing pain, I do a lot of walking, hoping always that I will get better. Some folks may think their cases are very bad, but there's always some one, somewhere, who is worse off than you. I found out that the more you pity yourself, the longer it will take the pain to disappear. So take my tip. Try to forget your troubles, and you'll feel better before you know it. It isn't easy, but it can be done in most cases.

A GOOD FORGETTER.

That's how life is, my boy. The best any of us can do is to face it—grin and bear it. That's easy advice to hand out, and certainly hard advice to follow, but in the long run it pays its dividends. You've shown yourself a brave and strong-minded philosopher in this trouble of yours.

Write again sometime, won't you? I'm sure if you give nature more time, you'll feel as well as ever. Good luck to you!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I've never written to you before; I've just read your column and tried to follow the advice you give other people. The purpose of this letter is to air my views on this much talked of subject of modern girls and boys, and the alleged lack of respect on the part of the boys.

I'm a modern young girl, not pretty by a long shot, and I haven't even a nice disposition. Of course, when I want to be nice, I can be, but I haven't yet learned to control my temper. When I was rather young I started to go out with boys, and everybody said, "You're too young. You'll be sorry later on, and wish you had waited until you were older." I suppose every one expected me to go to the bad, but I certainly surprised them and showed them I was not the fool they thought me.

When I was about fourteen, I started to go steadily with a really nice boy, and that friendship lasted until I was almost eighteen. He was a gentleman—although some of the letters I have read in your department state that there is a scarcity of them—and we were very happy together. We had terrible arguments at times, but every one has them. I was loyal, never looked at another boy, much less thought of going out with one, but because he two-timed me, I started to go out, and from that time on we went back together, broke off, back together, and finally just wore the whole affair completely to a frazzle. There was no argument that last time; we just parted, and let it go at that. I frequently saw him, and we picked up a friendship that never existed when we were in love. Now, after almost two years, I have found that this boy loves me more than he did when we were youngsters together. He'd marry me to-morrow, if I'd say the word, but I haven't said it.

I'm now going with another boy, another one of the gentlemen who seem to be so scarce. This boy hopes to marry me if he ever secures a position. He's been out of work ever since I've known him, except for brief periods during which he has been fortunate enough to find temporary employment. But that doesn't matter. The first boy I went with didn't have a position when I met him. Money has never mattered, somehow, because I've



known boys with money who would have done lots for me, but I've always found that I liked the poor ones better. It gives you something to think about when you can help them to get somewhere, and it takes away that feeling that you've had an easy time of it while the poor boy has spent his life working for you.

My present friend's attitude is, "I can't afford to take you anywhere much, and if you can go out with nice people, go ahead. I won't mind, as long as I know you love me." I do love him. I go out, strangely enough, with the boy I went with first. I've recently acquired another friend, another real gentleman. You may not believe me, but I once counted the boys with whom I had had dates, and the number was almost seventy-five. I have never had any unpleasantness with the boys I know, and I think it's a shame that all these girls have so many complaints. Is it the fault of the boys, or is the modern girl to blame for all her difficulty? I think that in many instances the girl is to blame. I can't understand how a perfectly nice boy would act in a difficult and disagreeable manner with a perfectly nice girl if she didn't give him a cause for it.

You may think I've set myself up as a paragon, but I haven't really meant to. I'm just like a lot of other girls, but perhaps I've been lucky. I've been nice to people, but I haven't gone unduly out of my way to be so.

Why don't you change your tactics, girls? Why don't you try to be demure for once, and don't go around giving every Tom, Dick, and Harry the impression that you're out for a wild time? Smoke, if you like. I do, but I don't drink, because that gives boys the impression that they can get away with a lot of things.

Girls, I wish you all luck. I hope each one of you finds one real man. I've found more than my share, more than lots of pretty girls will ever find, and I'm not exaggerating. I'm thankful that I've been so lucky.

What other girl could count on three good-looking, right-thinking boys, each with a good background, less riches, to do her bidding, who would promise at any time to turn over their weekly pay envelope into her frail little hands, to be disbursed as she saw fit? How many of you can answer that?

CECELIA.

We'll start counting noses right now, shall we, girls? Do you think Cecelia's belief that modern girls are

the cause of their own difficulties is true? Do modern girls act one way and expect to be treated another way? We're waiting for your views, readers.

Come again soon, Cecelia.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I compliment you on your department? I have always read your advice, and I think it is wonderful. I seldom write letters, so it is very hard to express myself now. Nevertheless, I do hope that you will understand me.

I am a young girl of seventeen. I smoke because I like it, although it isn't a habit with me. I drink occasionally, dance, and like to have a good time, and I think that I can truthfully say that every one I meet likes me because I want every one to like me, and I try to be as agreeable as I know how. I have a wonderful mother, but I just can't love my dad because he doesn't like me, and is very mean to me, although I try my best to please him and never say a word when he scolds me.

Last April I met John at a dance. He wanted to take me home, but I refused because I didn't know him very well. He was going to college and couldn't get out much, but he said he would like to write to me. We corresponded for about a month before we went out together, and we have been going together ever since. That is, we had dates whenever he could find time to come down. You see, besides his studies, he has his own orchestra; and is very busy.

We have never quarreled, even though I did go with other fellows. He said once that if I really loved him I would not want to go with any one else. I told him that he couldn't expect me not to want some enjoyment, and I refused to sit at home by myself. I didn't expect him to.

He wanted to get married last June, but I insisted that we should know each other better. We would also have had to live with his mother, and I certainly didn't want that, even though she is very nice.

He now goes to a college near by and I see him once a week. He says that by next June he ought to have some money saved and wants me to marry him then. I think my mother will agree to it, but I don't how to tell my dad. Mother says that I can take care of myself and that I have more sense than my sister, who is twenty-one. So please don't think that



I'm a brainless child, and that this is only a whim.

John and I love each other dearly. It isn't a crazy sort of love; it's deeper and finer than anything I've ever experienced before. We understand each other perfectly and get along wonderfully together. Thank you for your help.

BROWN EYES.

Dear Brown Eyes, at seventeen, a girl has plenty of time to think of marriage. If your boy friend is attending college and playing in an orchestra, he must be a mighty busy young man, too busy to take care of a wife.

I would suggest that you wait until he has at least finished college. By that time his bank account will no doubt swell a bit more, and you two can start married life without the minor worries that usually follow in the wake of a very lean purse. Meanwhile, if he is too busy to take you out very much, and you are not actually engaged, he should not demand that you stay at home and have no other friends. You're quite right in wishing to have some good times.

By the way, honey, when the time comes to break the glad news to your father, couldn't your mother do it for you, if your father is not very sympathetic toward you? It might be easier for you if your mother approached him first.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been a reader of your department for a number of years, and I think you give splendid advice. I am now coming to you with my own problem.

I am twenty-seven years old and have been married nearly nine years. I worked in an office for about four years after I was married, and made a good salary. After I married I found out that my husband was a spendthrift. He had always made a good salary and spent it as fast as he got it. He was about fifteen years older than I, and I realize now that I should never have married him.

He was always good and kind to me and

never really mistreated me. I wanted to save something for a rainy day and have a home and children, but although he was older than I, I seemed to be more settled. If I protested about spending so much on other people who went out with us only because he would pay the bills, he would get mad and say I was jealous. Therefore, we never saved anything.

After we were married about four years, my little baby girl was born. Ever since that time I have had to stay with my people most of the time. I would go back to live with my husband, thinking that perhaps we would start a real home, but in spite of my best efforts, our finances would soon be such that I would have to go back to my parents. This went on until I stayed away so long that I found I didn't love my husband and never had. If he had supported me and the baby, I would have stayed with him on her account, but it has been just a case of having to stay where I could.

I have been embarrassed so much by having people ask why I don't go back to him that I now hate the very mention of the subject. I have not pretended to care for him for the last eighteen months, and I have told him that I never intend to go back to him, and that I am going to get a divorce, but he doesn't care. He has done nothing whatever toward supporting me and our little girl for the last year. The reason I haven't gotten a divorce is that I haven't the money.

Now here is my real problem: I have fallen in love, although I know it must be wrong as the man is married. I have known him for a number of years. He has been married for ten years, and has three children. His wife has a terrible temper and is angry at him nearly all the time, although he has always provided well for her, and she has a nice home and everything she needs. She talks about him all the time, and says she doesn't love him. I don't take his word for this; I heard her talk before I ever went out with him. I guess she loves him to a certain extent, but she is never satisfied, no matter what he does for her.

My people like him, and think all their trouble is her fault, but they don't know that I have ever been out with him. I don't suppose I should ever have gone with him, but I fell desperately in love, and somehow I felt sorry for him, knowing how she treated him. The first time I ever went out with him I told him it was wrong and asked him to talk with her and try to



get her to be more considerate of him, but she has only grown more disagreeable.

He says that she killed his love for her years ago, and that he has just stayed on for the children's sake, but he thinks it would be better to give up than to stay on with her; she provokes him so. I feel sure that he loves me as much as I love him, and I believe we could be perfectly happy. I don't think he would be untrue to me; I think she has caused him to do all the wrong he has ever done.

He wants to give me the money to get a divorce, and wants to get one himself so we can get married and try to build a real home together. He loves my little girl, and after we get straightened out and settled, we would have her with us. As it is now, I cannot be with her.

He is financially able to arrange his business so that his wife and children would have ample to live on, and he feels that it would be better for them to separate than to live as they do now.

I don't want to do anything that would be wrong. I don't feel that I would be the cause of his leaving her, because she has brought it on herself from the start. I feel that this man and I could be perfectly happy together, and I want to begin life over with something to look forward to.

A WIFE IN DOUBT.

We all want to have something to live for, something to look forward to, honey, but happiness is hard to grasp sometimes. You don't want to be responsible in any way for the breaking up of this man's home, do you? I'd advise you to say nothing to him on the subject of his divorce; then if he gets it and comes to you when you, too, are free, the romance will take on a different light. For the present, however, nothing serious can exist between you.

It's always dangerous to destroy two marriages in order to build up another one, but if you will never go back to your husband, and feel sure that he won't try to give you a home, it would be advisable for you to get your freedom before you start out looking for love, and feel really ready for another beginning to your life. You're still quite young, dear,

and need not feel so hopeless about your future. Just build it on a good, solid basis, and your happiness will be more assured.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been reading your advice for five or six years, and find much interest in your department. I, too, have a problem. Will you help me out?

I am a man of twenty-five. I married when I was sixteen. My wife was two years older than I. We got along fine for the first two years. I had to work long hours, and my wife was so jealous that she began to accuse me of taking other women out. From that time on our troubles started.

Finally I agreed to leave the town where I was employed by a contracting firm, and move to a distant oil town where I bought a grocery store. We also bought a house and furniture, and had a good business for about a year. Then my wife became tired of the store and wanted to move. She said I met too many women. I never flirted; I was just nice to every one, as a man in business has to be to his customers. My wife nagged, so I sold my business. We moved away from the store, and I began to look for work.

Work was scarce, so I took a job at my old trade as mechanic in a garage and filling station. I loved the work, for it was the kind I had done in my home town.

However, my wife just couldn't get the jealous thoughts out of her mind, so our troubles started again. She spent most of her time watching me. She said she loved me and was afraid some one else would win me away from her.

I asked my shop pal what he would do if he had a wife like that. He said he would go out with other women, and that it might cure my wife of accusing me falsely.

So I followed his advice. The first night I had a date I told my wife about it. It made her more jealous than ever. I didn't even think of leaving her, as we have three fine boys, but from then on life became so miserable that I finally left and went back home.

My wife stayed in the oil town, and is now going out with another man. I also have been seeing a nice girl who is not quite seventeen. She says she loves me better than any one else, and wants to be my wife. I will admit I love her, but do



you think she really loves me, or will she tire of me when she is older?

I am eight years her senior. She knows all about my married life, and says that after we are married she will do all she can for my three boys. Do you think I would be doing wrong if I married her? I love her very much and I am longing to have my boys with me. It has been five months since I last saw them. Please give me your advice.

LAWRENCE.

A jealous wife is a difficult person to put up with, but do you think you should have left her and the children? Couldn't you in some way have managed it so that your wife would have spent her energies on things other than jealous, imaginary thoughts about you? Couldn't you try again? You were very foolish to follow your friend's advice.

You may think you are in love with this youngster whom you mention in your letter, but at seventeen, girls are apt to mistake a crush, which will wear off sooner or later, for real, lasting love. You are a married man and a father, and even if you are not living with your wife at present, it isn't very commendable on your part to make love to some other girl.

I would advise you to settle things with your wife one way or another, my boy, before you go courting any girl. Why not ask your wife to give you another chance, and try hard, both of you, to keep your home together for the boys' sake?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am puzzled by the way my boy friend has been acting recently, and wish you could help me find out what is wrong. He comes from a nice family, and I have been going with him for the past five years. About a year ago he lost his father, and then he changed suddenly. He stopped calling on me, but was seen with several other girls of my acquaintance.

I work both during the day and the evening, and haven't much time to get acquainted with younger boys and girls. Recently this boy started calling on me again, and he escorts me to and from work.

However, this is what is really puzzling me. He has introduced all of his former girl friends to his mother, and they are invited to visit her occasionally, but he has never introduced me to her. He is well acquainted with my mother and brothers, and seems to get along fine with them, but I would like to know why he does not introduce me to his mother.

I come from a fine family, well-to-do, have attended good schools, and have been working since I was sixteen years of age. A few months ago he got into trouble, and the first thing he did was to call on us and tell us everything, but something seems to hold him back when it comes to introducing me to his mother.

A couple of years ago he took me to a dance, and some one informed his mother that I drank too much with him, but he explained to her that I did not touch liquor. Can you tell me the reason why he does not want to introduce me to his mother?

ROSEBUD.

Perhaps the reason why your friend has not introduced you to his mother is because he may not have explained to her that some one else has been telling stories about your drinking with her son, and she is still under a false impression regarding you, dear.

I would advise you to take this up with him, and try to find out the reason why he is so backward about taking you to meet his mother. After a five-year friendship, it's about time you met his family, especially since he is well acquainted with yours. If, however, he shows no signs of getting serious, I'd advise you to make new friends. Go out with other boys whenever you get the chance. I'm sure you'll find some one who will treat you with more consideration.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I take up some of your space for my problem? I suppose my problem isn't very unusual, but it's important to me.

I am nearly twenty, and have a fairly good job as stenographer. Lately I have been helping my family, because my dad hasn't worked steadily for nearly two years. I feel that I owe them the little I give



them, because my mother is a wonderful mother, and my dad has always been a good provider.

Here is my problem: I have been going steady for a little over a year. I love this boy, and I'm sure he loves me, but he has never worked a day since I met him. He had been out of the hospital two weeks when I met him, and for the last eight months he has been going to the doctor two or three times a week. His sickness explains why he doesn't work. He is getting better now and able to do light work, but he can't seem to find a job.

I don't know what to do. I like to dance and go riding, but we can't do either because he doesn't dance and he hasn't a car. Most of the time we stay home and play cards. About twice a week we go to the movies, but I have to pay for this, and it certainly limits my clothes when I spend double money for movies. He objects every time I suggest the movies, because he hates to go on my money but Mrs. Brown, what can I do? I get so fed up sitting at home, and I know my temper and patience won't last if I have to sit home every night.

I want to get married, and so does he, but we can't. Everything seems to end with, "We can't." I have always wanted a home of my own; I love to do housework. Please tell me whether or not I should stick to this boy until he gets on his feet. I do love him, and he is steady and reliable. He doesn't drink at all. I want to keep on with him, but I just don't know whether I should spend the best part of my life waiting. It will be years before we can get married.

I will be watching for your answer. Thank you.

WINNIE.

In this day and age it is wise to try to be practical and sensible, although when romance comes along, these two staid old words don't seem very important. However, sooner or later they manage to bob up again and, in your case, Winnie, they've bobbed up already.

Of course, a normal, fun-loving girl doesn't want to stay at home every evening, even if her boy friend happens to be going through a somewhat trying financial period. But if you two cannot marry now, and it will be years, as you say, before you

can do so, wouldn't it be better to be just very good friends, without excluding all other friendships? That wouldn't be quite fair to either of you.

If your boy friend can't dance, and has regained his health, how about teaching him some simple dance steps? Then even if you two can't go out so very much, you can invite some of your other friends in for an evening's fun and dance at home. Your parents wouldn't object to your having an informal get-together at home, would they? It's the best thing for young people.

Girls, do you think Winnie could accept other dates, or must she stay in all the time, even though it will be years before she can think of marrying her boy friend? How about writing in to let Winnie know the opinion of other girls on the matter?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: You seem so much like a mother, and so much more kind and understanding than my own mother, though perhaps I shouldn't say that about her, that I feel that writing to you will ease the ache and disappointment I have to face every day because my parents won't take the trouble to see things from my viewpoint.

I'm sixteen, and a lonelier girl doesn't exist. At least, that's how I feel about it. I have one brother, but he is twenty-three and has his own interests. Sometimes he takes me to a movie, and twice he has taken me to dances at his club.

I'm going to high school, but although I meet girls and boys with whom I would like to be friends, and whom I should love to entertain in my home as other girls do, I am not allowed to have any friends at all. Mother and dad think I'm crazy when I say I'd like to have boy friends like other girls, or give little parties occasionally, and invite some of the boys and girls I meet at school. Dad says I'm boy crazy, but I'm not. I like boys and girls, and can't understand why my parents should think it would be disgraceful to let any boy call to see me.

They say that when I am twenty and ready to look for a husband, I'll have plenty of time for boy friends and dates.



But until I'm twenty, must I do without friends? Is that fair?

My parents are very strict, and as I don't like the idea of sneaking out as so many other girls do, I stay home. I'm so lonely and bored, Mrs. Brown, that sometimes I just can't help crying myself to sleep. There was one girl with whom my parents didn't mind my being friendly, but she moved away, so now I haven't even one friend. Most girls in school have boy friends, and these girls won't bother with a girl who can't have boy friends, and will not go out on the sly to their dances and parties.

When I do manage to go out with a girl to a movie, it has to be on either a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, and my parents watch the time, allowing for the half hour it takes me to go to and come from the movie. If I stay out longer, they nag. I'm so sick of everything I feel like doing something desperate. I almost hate my parents at times, because they won't be like other parents who try to make their children happy.

Don't you think parents like mine should let their daughters have a little freedom and some friends? BITTER SIXTEEN.

Yes, dear, personally, I do believe that girls of your age should have a little freedom, and be treated like human beings who possess warm hearts and a natural desire for the friendship of other young people. Freedom in the extreme is, of course, not wise, but a little time off from school and home for some wholesome fun would do more good than harm. It is contact with others, aside from other things, that helps us to grow and expand mentally, and fills that special corner in our hearts which we like to reserve for those we call friends.

Don't you think, dear readers, that a youngster of sixteen or thereabouts, should be permitted and encouraged to bring her young friends home, no matter whether they are boys or girls? Shouldn't parents try to be friendly and cordial to their sons' and daughters' friends? Don't you think it warms a youngster's heart to be welcomed into a chum's

home, instead of being frozen by a gloomy, long-faced, indifferent attitude on the part of a friend's parents?

Let's get together on this, family. An exchange of opinions cannot help but be valuable both to the youngsters and the parents.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have something to say to Impartial Frank concerning women's preference for handsome men. That is not always so, as I have found out. I am not stating my age, but I'll say this—that I have gone with boys ever since the age of thirteen.

In those days, like the vast majority of young girls, I wouldn't look at a fellow unless he was good-looking, but after having gone with quite a number of them, I found that all the good-looking boys I met were conceited and thought a girl must do exactly as they wished her to and one or two proved to be despicable cads. I'm not saying that all good-looking fellows are that way. Personally, I do not know; I'm only saying that of those I went out with.

I vowed that I never would go out with another fellow who was good-looking, and I haven't.

I'm now going steady with a boy who isn't good-looking. What do good looks matter, if the person owning them is not worthy of them? I wouldn't exchange my steady boy friend for all the good-looking fellows in the world. Good looks do not matter to me now. The boy I'm going with has qualities that make up for his lack of good looks. He isn't homely, but he isn't at all handsome; he just has a nice, honest face. That's the only way I can describe him. But I know that he loves me, and would do anything for me. What does anything else matter?

Impartial Frank, please don't think all the girls and women prefer handsome men. I happen to know that it isn't so. All my girl friends have boy friends whom no one with good eyesight would ever label "handsome."

Come on, all you girls with homely boy friends; stick up for your own sex; tell Impartial Frank that handsome men do not matter to you; and give the not-so-handsome boys a chance to prove their worth!

Let's have more satisfaction and less complaining from the boys. Give them a chance, girls, and you'll find that the vast majority of them are worth their weight in gold. That's what I have found out.



Mrs. Brown, I hope that you'll find space in your department for me, as I'd like to have Impartial Frank read my answer to his letter. Good luck to you, and to your department, and may you long give advice to those who need it. STEVIE.

Thank you for your good wishes, dear. It's more than interesting to find so many girls in favor of young men who possess character rather than good looks. I do hope Impartial Frank, who said girls consider only good-looking men, won't miss this. Stenographer also has a few words of encouragement for Frank.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Your comments on Impartial Frank's letter prompted me to write and I shall try to tell the boys who feel that girls are too particular about good-looking men just why the girls are that way.

You no doubt have often wondered why, at dances, no matter how many stags there are, there inevitably are quite a number of girls sitting out dances. It's because men choose partners first for their looks, and then for their dancing. Do you realize that a man may be comparatively homely, but if he dresses well, and dances passably, any one of those girls would be glad to dance with him. Still he passes them all up, picks out the girl he considers the best-looking one on the floor, asks her for a dance, and then wonders why he sometimes is turned down. The best-looking girls don't always have time for the less attractive men, but these men rarely think of paying attention to the less attractive girls.

Girls who work for a living have gone through a hard finishing school. They have had to learn how to dress by watching others, also how to act, how to dance, how to talk. Their parents did not have the money to give them many advantages, so when the girls have reached the point where their appearance is considered all right by others, they are quite within their rights in expecting nothing but the best in dancing partners. Do you blame them? I don't.

I am using a dance to illustrate my point. The same things apply to every point of contact between boys and girls, from football hops during high-school days to week-end parties later on. It takes so little to make a man nice looking. His suit doesn't have to be expensive if it fits him

well and is well-pressed. A little personal grooming goes a long way. But a girl, if fellows only stopped to consider the trouble girls have to go through to get ready for a simple party—washing, ironing, mending, curling, manicuring, matching colors—they would be a little more considerate.

A girl doesn't ask to be the belle of the ball. If you could see the strained looks in girls' eyes, the set little smiles, and the ruined handkerchiefs that mark the finish of a ruined evening, you boys would think twice before passing them by. Give some of these girls a break, boys, and you will find that they are just as pretty as their more successful sisters when they're happy, and their clothes are just as nice as those of the really popular girls. All they need is a little attention, and they will blossom just like roses in the sun.

STENOGRAPHER.

Are men really fair in their evaluation of girls? Do men choose for themselves, or do they just follow the crowd of stags in rushing the most popular girls of the evening? Can these popular girls be blamed for paying attention only to the most attractive men? Isn't there something wrong somewhere in this game of popularity when the girl without a background of masculine attention hasn't a chance with the general run of men?

Stenographer's letter is the kind to make us all think a bit.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I've just finished reading some of your advice, and I feel confident that you can help me in my present trouble.

To begin with, my mother died in 1930. At that time I had been separated for eight months from my first husband, whom I married when I was sixteen. He has come to see me often during our separation, and we have remained friends. I know he still loves me, but I do not love him. After mother died I was at a loss as to what to do, so I went to work, and lived with my sister.

The following July I met the one and only man for me. He was twenty-seven and I was twenty-two. I had quite a good job, but he was out of work. We planned to marry as soon as he got a job,



but circumstances at my home and at his sister's, where he was staying, suddenly put us on our own. We rented a tiny house. Every one took it for granted that we had been married in another State, but we never had the money to pay for the ceremony. Nevertheless, no two people have ever been more faithful to each other.

A week after our supposed wedding, Bill was taken sick. There followed weeks in the hospital; weeks I spent in mental torture and hard work. Then he was temporarily well again. I lost my job, and we accepted an invitation to keep house while a friend of mine and her husband were at work. The husband began paying too much unnecessary attention to me, so as soon as I found work, Bill and I moved again.

We were only there a short while when Bill had another heart attack. It meant more hard work for me, and three more weeks in the hospital for him. While he was there my friend's husband again asked me to go out with him. I refused. He knew I would not tell his wife, as I think the world of her. Anyway, my work went down to nothing, so we went back to the town where Bill and I had met. There we spent part of the time with his sister, and part of it with mine. He was bed-ridden most of this time, and I took care of him. There was another spell in the hospital, then the doctors gave up the case, said it was just a matter of time. Perhaps a lot of women would have stepped out by that time, and let his people do the best they could. There was only the tie of love, but to me that was the greatest tie of all.

The next thing was his desire to go back to the little town where he was born and where two of his sisters live. I contrived a way of getting him there, and then followed two months of the worse misery I have ever known, before Bill died.

I came back to my home town a physical and mental wreck. I had been back only a few weeks when my girl friend wrote that she wanted me to come back and keep house for her again.

During the first six weeks back at her house I plunged into everything head first to try to overcome the hurt and emptiness in my heart. I danced, drank, and went out with men. One or two offered me marriage, two offered everything but marriage. My friend's husband asked me to promise not to marry until he could obtain a divorce and to give him a chance. His wife suspected something and asked me. I told

her the truth, but we all remained friends; he treated her well, and they both treated me nicely. All was forgiven and forgotten—but he did not forget. He continually tried to see and talk to me alone, until finally I could no longer stand it and went back to my sister's.

After I returned to my sister's, I became more deeply involved. My first husband lives here, and since my return, he has begun to court me all over again, including a proposal of marriage.

Mrs. Brown, I don't care for him, but he loves me so much; the look in his eyes when I refused his attentions hurts me terribly.

If I marry him, I shall have to spend my life with a man I really care nothing for. He is very good to me, helps me in many ways, but if he would only forget me and go out with other girls, I would be happier. He says he can't go out with any other girl, however. He's a hard worker, could give me a nice home, but what kind of home would it be without love? There is another man I like quite well, and he says he loves me. My ex-husband and this man hate each other, and say I must choose between them. Both of them know about Bill. What would you advise?  
HERE'S HOPING.

My dear, I don't think it would be quite fair to marry either man without real love, do you? No matter how hurt one or the other or both may be, it is better to hurt them now than to contract a marriage without love on both sides. Marrying for a home or out of gratitude does not always turn out as happily as one expects it to.

Why not keep on trying to find work? It may be against your wish to have your sister help you financially, but you may be able to repay her later, and I'm sure that would be better than marrying a man you don't care for. In the meantime, tell both men how you feel, be frank in saying that it wouldn't be fair for you to marry either one. The only way in which you can put your life on a sound basis is by facing facts and emotions squarely.

Good luck to you, dear.



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